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Geo. Estes

The Wayfaring Man

A Tale of The Temple

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DEDICATION

To the Spirit of fraternity and fortitude of that Olden Time which gave birth to the Mystic Tie of Freemasonry this work is reverently dedicated.

—*The Author*

PREFACE

THE WAYFARING MAN appears but briefly in Masonic legends, and his part seems of minor importance in the matchless drama enacted a thousand years before the Savior suffered upon the cross. Yet the author of this book, by some compelling force, has had his thoughts drawn to that obscure character until there has grown up in his mind, around the marvelous happenings of that period, a wondrous story of the Wayfaring Man's part in the golden days of the GREAT TEMPLE.

The idea came from that superb work of Charles Boutelle, "The Man of Mount Moriah." The thought germ once planted, summer's perfumed showers of Masonic kindnesses throughout many ripening years have developed it until it has forced its way into the light of day, bringing with it (as the author fondly hopes and believes) many treasures and jewels of that remote past, which though long buried in the rubbish of ages, excel in beauty the treasures of the present.

Much labor and research have been devoted to the production of the book. The names and reigns of monarchs, dates of wars and descriptions of great events are substantially correct, and the same can be said of the manners, customs and industries of the times.

The reader should not be shocked to learn, perhaps for the first time, that the worship of the Egyptian god—the bull, Apis—was observed by King Solomon's ranking queen, with an army of pagan priests and idolators inside the sacred precincts of the Great Temple consecrated to the worship of Jehovah; a meeting in the same sanctuary of the most exalted and the most degraded forms of worship known to

humanity. But this was true, and so was the attempt, detailed in these pages, to overthrow King Solomon, and capture not only Palestine, but all the rest of the world, and compel all peoples on pain of death, to worship the Bull and to signify their worship by casting themselves upon the earth at his approach, and permitting him to trample upon their prostrate bodies.

If the story of the Wayfaring Man shall prove of interest to the Masonic Fraternity, wheresoever dispersed, it will have added something to the cement which should unite all Masons into one fraternal band of friends and brothers.

George Estes

Cedarwood, Near Troutdale, Oregon, 1922.

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CHAPTER I.

The Symbol

Over the great Assyrian desert that bounds the eastern frontier of Palestine the dusk of evening had settled and rapidly rolled westward across hills and vales, above the deep gorge of the Jordan and down the long western slope of the ancient land of Canaan to the Great Sea.

On the side of a lateral gorge, called in that land a wady, that cut its slanting way down through the high eastern wall to the Jordan's bed, was perched a hut occupied by the family of a goatherd comprising the father, mother, and son about twenty-five years of age.

Although the hovel showed poverty, there was something about it different from the squalid homes of those who followed for their living the herding of sheep and goats in that neighborhood. Like the other huts, it was made of stones which could be gathered in plenty from the stony soil of the hills and wadys of that desolate land, yet it was unlike the other huts.

The stones had been rudely broken into shape so that they fitted one upon another in such manner as to produce a general appearance not unpleasing to the eye, and effective in keeping out the cold of winter nights. The doorway was not arched. The arch had not yet become known in that pastoral land, but a stone of unusual length had been broken into oblong shape, and served for a capstone across the top of the door.

Out of the doorway came the sound of grinding corn with mortar and pestle, from which the evening meal was soon to be prepared.

As darkness came out of the great plain to the east and overspread the wady, the goatherd and his son returned

from the fold, where the goats had been secured for the night, the same as had been done by father and son and those who had gone before them for centuries upon centuries.

The father was of advanced age and his long white beard extended far below his waist. The son was erect and stalwart, keen of eye and vigorous of limb.

The father and son were holding a conversation which for that time and place would have been called animated.

"Nay, Baana," said the father, "tarry at home and continue thy work as a goatherd for the time the Lord grants thee to live, as thy father will do and thy forefathers have done for these long ages. It is not good to change thy allotted station in life. It breeds discontent and, besides, thou hast not the skill to hew the great and costly stones for the Temple, and if thou goest there seeking that work without knowledge they may put thee with the seventy thousand Canaanites who bear burdens and do the work of asses in drawing loads."

"But father," said Baana, "Thou knowest I have some skill in fashioning stones and laying them up. There is no house like unto ours, from where our wady cuts down to the Jordan's waters on the west to the sands of the great desert in the east. Every stone in it was broken into shape, made ready and laid up by my own hands. Is it not strong and beautiful?"

"Strong enough to keep out the prowling animals that shun the sun's light and hunt their prey only in the time of darkness, and beautiful enough for the spirit of God, whose law is love, to dwell therein; but when thou shalt come to the great city of Jerusalem and behold the power and arrogance of its wealthy men and the cunning and duplicity of its beautiful women, then will thy heart be filled with a strange fear of unknown dangers which come not to the rude dwelling of a goatherd. O, my son, be satisfied with thy humble home hidden away in a wady of the Jordan's walls, on the side farthest from those unknown dangers, and live here in peace through all thy allotted days."

In silence father and son now pushed aside the door-covering of untanned skin, and entered the hut.

The sound of the grinding ceased, the mother welcomed them kindly and having finished the preparation for the evening meal, it was eaten in silence.

But Baana was fired with a wish to see the world, and so in the course of a few days began the simple preparations for his journey to the city where the great and wise king sat in judgment over Palestine.

Upon the morning he was to leave his parents' hut, his mother, who possessed a quiet, thoughtful nature, took from an opening between two rocks in a wall of the hovel a small object wrapped in soft tanned skin which, however, was seamed and cracked and appeared to be very old. Unwrapping the skin with great care, a small casket of copper was uncovered, which clearly was of great age. The casket was beautifully chased with knops and acacia flowers in low relief; the copper was green with age, except upon the corners and raised parts; some of the delicate tracery was marred and battered, indicating that it had been roughly handled at times in the remote past; otherwise the green coating had never been disturbed.

The mother explained that the casket and its contents had been given to her, an only child, by her father upon his deathbed, with the explanation that it was half a thousand years old and that it indicated to those who understood its meaning their family history in the earliest times.

At that age writing in any form was uncommon, but family histories were wonderfully well preserved by oral communications which passed from parent to child and were repeated until committed to memory, the most exacting memorizing of every word in the family legend being required.

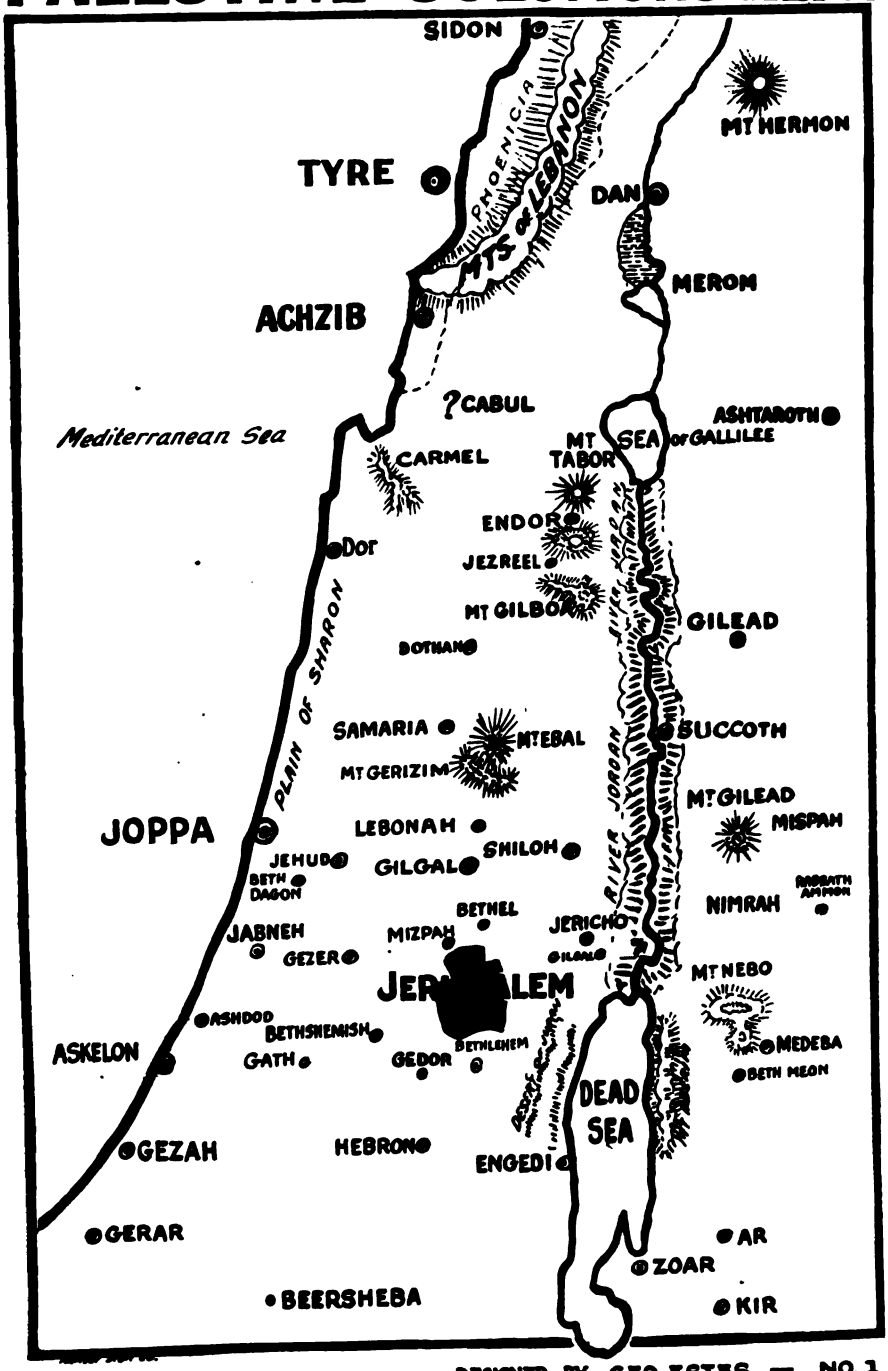
Often symbols were used to assist the memory in retaining the principal events and, sometimes, when matters of great importance had transpired, these symbols were beautifully wrought from precious metals, and were of great value.

The mother opened the copper casket and disclosed within it, reposing on the papyrus lining, a beautiful triangle of massive gold, with sides of the same length and angles of equal degrees, and bearing a brilliant blue sapphire of great size superimposed at each point. To one point of the triangle was attached a gold ring of hexagonal form and to this was attached the two ends of a gold chain containing seventy-two large links, the chain being long enough to pass over the head and permit the golden triangle to repose on the breast of the wearer. The large links were in reality elliptical-shaped plates of gold with small holes at each end through which were passed small rings of gold uniting the larger links to each other. Each large link or plate was superbly chased, each differently from all the others, and each bore inside of the chased border a Hebrew character.

Reverently, the mother placed the wondrous chain around her son's neck and permitted the golden symbol to rest upon his breast for a short space. Then she put it beneath the hand-woven gaberdine which he had donned as his single worldly garment in place of his untanned skin coat and, weeping on his breast, she exacted his solemn promise that he would, under no possible condition, part with the precious amulet or any of the parts which composed it, even if faced with starvation, and that he should keep it safely until he saw her again, if ever; if not, that it should pass on to his children.

Leaving his father and mother with their patient, kind hearts filled with sadness as deep as the measure of human grief, Baana turned his face to the west and with a skin pouch at his side and shepherd's crook in hand to lean on in difficult places, set out down the wady for the ford of the river Jordan.

PALESTINE IN SOLOMONS REIGN



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CHAPTER II.

The Ford of the River Jordan

From the home of Baana's father to the city of Jerusalem is but a short way, but in that age it was considered a great distance.

It was the habit, fixed by rigid custom ages old, for that pastoral people not to wander far from their birthplaces. The son followed the trade or employment of his father unless permission to change was obtained from proper authority, and that was difficult, requiring many explanations and entreaties.

Every scene which Baana beheld, after leaving the grazing lands of his father, was new and strange to him and filled his mind with interest oftentimes akin to dismay.

The River Jordan (in Hebrew the Downcomer) is one of the wonders of the world. It is at once the straightest and the crookedest river in existence. It is straight in the sense that a rail fence may be straight, and crooked as the same rail fence. Instead of flowing toward the sea as do most rivers, it parallels the sea coast, and for two-thirds of its length its bed is a great distance below sea level. It flows through a deep gorge which sharply separates the historic land of Canaan on the west or right bank from the Assyrian plains on the east, and the fords or passages across the Jordan are comparatively few in number and very difficult.

The deep valley of the Jordan and the high walls which arise from the second bench of the river to the land of Canaan were matters of profound astonishment to Baana's inexperienced mind.

There being a road leading from the great Assyrian plain on the east down into the wady, Baana naturally took this road and finally found himself at one of the historic fords

of the river. Having made his way across by the stepping-stones provided at the ford, which were used when the river was at the lowest stage, he sat at a convenient place on the west bank of the river to rest and refresh himself from the meagre supply of food carried in the skin pouch at his side.

While thus engaged his eyes wandered up and down the great walls and jutting promontories along the gorge of the river. His attention was finally attracted to the steady hoof-beats of a horse galloping on the hard surface of a roadway, and shortly a horseman came into view, urging his horse at top speed down the river on the road which followed its western bank.

On sight of Baana he pulled up, alighted and inquired his destination. Baana briefly explained his purpose. The stranger was a man who would attract attention anywhere. He was tall and very erect, about the age of forty-five years. His hair was straight and glistening black, like the hair of an Egyptian. His complexion was swarthy. His eyebrows and eyelashes were the color of his hair. His eyes were dark, with darker smudges in the pupils. His beard, cropt to a medium length, was shiny black.

His clothing consisted of an Oriental gown and camlet of yellowish brown, all of the same material, ornamented with a black band in the form of a lattice border.

A heavy, straight, two-edged sword clanked in the scabbard at his belt; his carriage bespoke one accustomed to authority.

Baana scanned him closely, much interested in his general appearance. Around his neck, under the high collar of his camlet, hung a polished chain of square links. Baana surmised that this chain was made of solid silver. In the motions and gestures of the horseman the opening of his camlet over his breast spread sufficiently for Baana to notice that upon the end of the chain directly over the breast there was suspended a talisman or ornament of some kind which was, as Baana thought, the width of two barleycorns and the length up and down of perhaps eighteen or twenty bar-

leycorns. Baana noticed that the talisman also was of silver, beautifully chased. Its upper end was curved in the shape of an arc of a circle, the convex part upward, while its lower end was shaped in the same manner, with the convex part of the arc upward so that it ended in two points at the bottom and an upward rounded point at the top. Having been taught by a Hebrew priest a knowledge of the language of jewels and talismanni as a part of the standard learning of the times, Baana knew at once that the jewel and the chain which suspended it were replete with meaning to those who understood them, but he could not so much as guess what they represented, as his knowledge obtained from the priest did not include their forms or symbols. He was keenly alert, however, to the fact that they must indicate something of importance, perhaps of an official character in connection with the rulers of the empire, or some matter of a similar nature. Having thoroughly made up his mind before starting upon this momentous journey to increase his learning rapidly, Baana decided that the silver chain and beautiful jewel attached to it must have an important significance and, without appearing offensive, he made a mental picture of the chain and jewel that he might at some future time learn their import.

The horseman said to Baana that he was acquainted with many of the craftsmen and higher officers about the King's court and the great Temple, and that he could assist him in finding a place among the workmen which he could readily fill, and which would give him the opportunity to learn the work of a fellow-craft, and when he had acquired some experience in that service that he, the stranger, would see to it that Baana was advanced rapidly to higher positions. He asked Baana if he knew about the secret Fraternity in which every workman upon the Temple and its many auxiliary buildings must be enrolled before he could have permission to work in or about the Temple. Baana had been informed of this and so indicated to his questioner. The stranger then took from the bosom of his robe a small tablet of ivory and

with a glass stylus traced characters thereon and handed the tablet to Baana. The horseman directed Baana to approach Jerusalem from the northeast, and when in the archway of the gate of the city, known as the sheep gate, he would observe a man clothed in beadsman's blue, apparently looking for alms. He was to approach the beadsman and, under pretense of feeling in his pouch for a small piece of copper for him, he was to hand him the tablet and, thereafter, follow him. At this the horseman remounted his steed and galloped on the river road to the south. Baana followed him with his eyes and ears until he had passed out of sight and hearing, then turned his attention to the tablet. Writing was not common among the pastoral peoples of that time, but Baana had been animated by a desire to educate himself. His father and mother, being unable to write, he had visited a Hebrew priest who occupied a somewhat larger hovel than those in the neighborhood, albeit of rough stone, built in a wady a distance north of Baana's home. This Hebrew priest was in a very sparsely settled community and had but few to attend his ministry, but he was industrious and studious and was pleased to have Baana as a student. From him Baana had learned to read and write the Hebrew tongue and also being on the border-land between Palestine and Assyria, he had acquired from the priest, and improved by contact with Assyrians, a knowledge of their language, and thus he learned to read and write Assyrian almost as well as his native tongue. He also mastered many other languages, alphabets and character writing under the teachings of the good priest, including the Phoenician language and alphabet, the Karchedonian, Cretan and other tongues, together with the marvelous language of the lapidary in cutting precious stones upon which the most important records of these times were kept.

The ivory tablet, however, was puzzling. It was neither written in Hebrew nor Assyrian, nor in any language of which he had knowledge, and the characters were wholly unlike anything that he had ever seen before. There was no

similarity in any respect in the general form of the symbols to Hebrew, Assyrian or Phoenician, and he could not so much as guess at the interpretation of one character on the tablet.

Baana, though inexperienced with the world, was naturally quick-witted. The courtesy and evident interest of the stranger had pleased him greatly; but the fact that the tablet given him was traced in characters entirely beyond his comprehension gave him a somewhat uneasy feeling. Further reflection added to his uneasiness. He recalled that a beadsman was a beggar given official permission to beg and that the blue suit, spoken of as an identification by the horseman, was the uniform required by custom and law to be worn by a beadsman. Would the beadsman, when found, be able to read the strange writing? One who could communicate his thoughts in a strange and unknown hand in characters which appeared to be symmetrical and of great beauty could undoubtedly read and write Hebrew and perhaps many other languages as well. Writing being uncommon, the possessor of that art could earn a greater competence from its use as a scrivener than by begging of the passer-by. There was something wrong or, at least, incongruous in the situation. However, Baana determined to find the beadsman and let the situation develop as it would.

Having rested and satisfied his hunger, he journeyed onward, following the road which gradually wound its way through a wady up the western wall of the valley of the Jordan and led out upon the plateau or inclined plain which bears westward and downward to the shores of the Mediterranean.

He met people of many nationalities and different garbs; passed others on foot, older and less active than himself and was in turn passed by swift dromedaries, camels and vehicles bearing civil and military officers and others toward the city.

The country traversed by the road he was following comprised a plateau of great elevation, inclining westerly. It was for the most part grazing land and was the eastern border

of the ancient land of Canaan. Within sight of the road were many flocks tended by shepherds, each bearing his crook and pouch as was the custom with that pastoral people. In the late afternoon, being tired with his long walk and oppressed by the heat of the sun, he joined a small group of shepherds who had come together and were seated under a clump of trees near a spring of sweet, cold water. The shepherds were gravely discussing the one thing which at that time occupied the minds of all in the countryside round about, namely the construction of the great Temple at Jerusalem, which had been foretold by the prophets of Israel and prayed for by her patriarchs and kings for five centuries. The magnitude of the plans for the Temple and its buildings was discussed at length by the shepherds, but one of them said to another, in the presence of Baana:

"Is it not strange that our most wise king cannot in all Israel, from Hebron to Tiberius and from Jordan's banks unto the sea, find one skilled sufficiently to plan the great structures and superintend their erection?"

Said another:

"Word has been sent out that our mighty king has sent high officers of the realm to the King of Tyre, a pagan, asking for a builder to rule over the great multitude of craftsmen and artisans who will be employed upon the Temple; in the quarries where the stones are to be hewn; in the clay grounds where the vessels of brass and copper are to be cast; in the mountains of Lebanon where the cedar and fir trees are to be felled and shaped; in the shops where the gold and silver are to be hammered out; at the looms where the robes of the high priest, and other priests of the Temple, are to be woven; and in the places where the musical instruments are to be shaped and burnished for the heralds and trumpeters of the Temple and its grounds."

It was clear that the shepherds' minds had been poisoned by some evil spirit who was attempting to create dissatisfaction throughout Palestine because of the coming of the powerful stranger from Tyre to rule over the works. Thus

they talked and expressed their dissatisfaction until the pimpernell or shepherds' clock told that it was time for the shepherds to house their sheep in the folds and return to their rude homes where the corn was being ground for the evening meal. Baana then resumed his journey.

In time he beheld the great city rising from the hills and elevations upon which it is built and, inquiring his way where convenient, finally reached the north gate or, more properly, the sheep gate.

CHAPTER III.

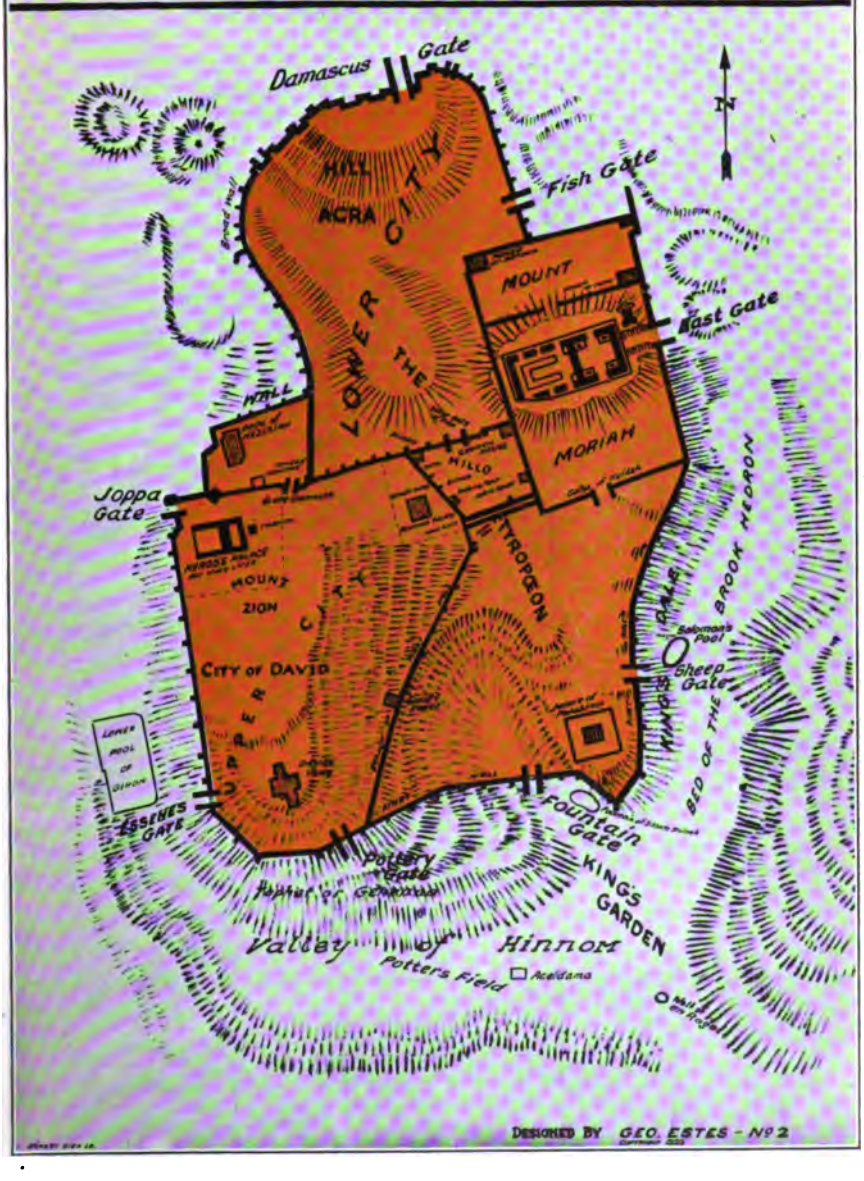
The Holy City

The City of David, called by the Hebrews, Yerushalaim (City of Peace), at the beginning of King Solomon's reign, a thousand years before the dawn of the Christian era, was at the height of its power and splendor. At no time before nor since, has the city attained such magnificence as in the period of the building of its first great Temple, begun four years after the commencement of the reign of King Solomon and a thousand and four years before the birth of Christ.

The origin of the city is clouded in mystery. Jerusalem was originally peopled by the Jebusites or native inhabitants of what was later known as the land of Canaan. Prior to its occupation by the Hebrews, it had been taken and strongly fortified by the Egyptians. From them it was captured by Joshua at the time when the Children of Israel had been delivered from their Egyptian bondage half a thousand years before the reign of Solomon. Joshua further strengthened the defenses of the city, and this was continued down to the reigns of David and Solomon. The ancient name of the city, as indicated by the legend stamped upon the silver shekel minted in the time of Simon Maccabeus, was Yerushalaim Hakadusha, and no matter who has occupied the city as its rulers, whether Christians, Moslems or Pagans, it has, from the earliest times been regarded as an holy place. The Arabs designated it as El Mukaddis, the Sanctuary.

The city itself is located upon a succession of hills at an average height of half a mile above sea level, and at a still greater height above the bed of the river Jordan and its outlet, the Dead Sea. At the time of the building of the Temple, Jerusalem was completely surrounded by massive walls of stone, pierced by many gates which were strongly protected

JERUSALEM IN SOLOMON'S REIGN



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and which were used for many purposes besides ingress and egress to and from the city.

The great Temple, the foundation stones of which were then being placed in position, was located upon the highest hill within the walls of the city, called Mount Moriah. The city proper was located to the south and west of this mountain, and in order to enclose it and the Temple arising upon its summit within the city walls, a great wall had been thrown out to the north of the main wall completely around the base of Mount Moriah, coming in to the main wall of the city again upon the east.

All matters of human activity and endeavor were covered by local custom at that time because of wars and the constant efforts of one nation or race to conquer and subject neighboring peoples to slavery. It was necessary that the minutest rules governing everyday affairs be provided and carried out to prevent spies and others from entering the city, who might be sent by neighboring chiefs and kings for the purpose of assisting in the taking of the city.

One of these rules was that people engaged in certain purposes or en route to certain destinations, could pass in or out of the city only through special gates designated for their use. The reason for this was that the keepers of the gates could carry in their minds knowledge of certain classes of people such as shepherds, merchants of certain kinds, dealers in certain products, horsemen, camel drivers and various races and tribesmen. If the use of all gates was permitted indiscriminately, it would be impossible for the keepers to identify those passing through and make certain that no one was admitted except those who were subjects, or friendly to the reigning monarch. Thus it will be seen that the duties of the keepers as to permitting people to pass into the city were much the same as the duties of tylers of Masonic lodges, and from this method of guarding entrances, then universal, the office of the lodge tyler sprang into existence.

The great gates were not mere doors through the walls of the city, but were similar to the medieval posterns, and of

themselves were important structures with wings extending at right angles to the main walls a considerable distance both outside of the walls and inside towards the city, and were covered over with vaulted roofs. The entrances to each of these vaulted passages were protected by smaller gates at both ends of the tunnel-like structures and sometimes by additional gates midway of the great vestibules.

These structures, designated as gates, were large and roomy. Their walls were strengthened with great stone buttresses at the ends and with pilasters along their inner sides. They were provided with colonnades, galleries and seats and contained small booths or shops in which shopkeepers and tradesmen cried their wares.

Moreover, these great gates of the cities of Palestine, and particularly of Jerusalem, were used as inferior courts somewhat similar to the courts of justices of the peace of the present day, in which minor judges, called elders, sat, heard complaints of the people and rendered judgment. From the judgments of the courts held in the gates of the city, appeal might be taken to the great Jewish court of seventy-two persons called the Sanhedrim. In the east gate of the Temple enclosure, which was exactly opposite the east gate in the outer wall, was built a magnificent entrance-way into the forecourt, formed of eight quadrangular columns of great height. In this gate or entrance-way Solomon sat on an ivory inlaid throne (curule) and judged Israel.

The gates of the city of Jerusalem at the time of the building of the Temple were, therefore, institutions of great importance in the life of the people and affected the entire well-being not only of the inhabitants of the city, but of all Palestine.

As before stated, these gates were not used indiscriminately, but at certain gates ingress and egress were permitted to only one class of persons; for example, only horsemen might come and go at the horse gate and only water carriers were admitted to the city at the water gate, and so on. The most easterly one of the great north gates was the sheep gate

and only shepherds, with or without their flocks, might pass through this gate.

The purpose of the horseman who accosted Baana at the ford of the river Jordan is made plain by the fact that Baana was a shepherd and bore about his person and in his simple dress and the shepherd's crook which he carried unmistakable evidence of his calling. It would be only possible, therefore, for Baana to enter at the north gate, and this was well known to the horseman who had directed Baana aright thus far in his journey to Jerusalem.

As Baana approached the gate the number of persons on the road leading to it became more and more numerous. He studied them closely and observed that they were all shepherds or persons engaged in pastoral lines. Many of them drove small flocks of sheep which were freshly shorn and apparently well fed. He surmised that these sheep were going to various slaughter-houses, or butchers, inside of the walls of the city. All was new to him, and he watched closely in all directions, studying everything for the purpose of learning the ways of the great big beautiful world which was just opening wonderful vistas to his enquiring mind.

As he approached the gateway the crowd became dense, and the shop-keepers and others who had merchandise to sell were calling out their wares. Everybody appeared to be busy buying or selling or, in other ways, dealing with one another or talking to each other. He moved slowly at this point, being on the lookout for someone who might appear to be the beadsman to whom he was directed by the horseman at the ford of the river. By this time he had entered into the northern portal of the gate and discovered that it was a long and very lofty tunnel instead of a mere opening through a wall. He was greatly astonished at the dense crowd inside of the tunnel, and his attention at this time was directed to the guards who were examining all comers with great care and, in some instances, turning them back with scant ceremony. He was accosted by a guard who demanded in Hebrew his name and the place from which he

hailed and his destination. He explained as best he could and after being closely questioned by the guard, who appeared to be very suspicious, he was permitted to pass into the tunnel, only to be stopped by other guards later. Finally he noticed in the thickest part of the crowd a man of gigantic stature and apparently of great strength. He was dressed in blue and Baana questioned himself as to whether it was possible that this man was the beadsman to whom he had been directed by the horseman. Seeing no other person in sight in beadsman's dress at that moment, Baana approached the tall man and, upon attracting his attention, reached into the folds of his gaberdine and grasped the tablet given him by the horseman, with the intention of handing it to the blue-coated stranger; but to his astonishment the man in blue, looking straight at Baana, placed his index finger upon his lips, indicating by a sign instinctively understood by all persons, that Baana was not to speak. He then reached over and took Baana by the shoulder and pulled him to one side in the gateway and a little behind a pile of untanned skin bags filled with the merchandise of one of the shopkeepers. When well out of sight of the guards, the stranger extended his hand to Baana in a way which indicated that he was prepared to receive from Baana anything which the latter had to offer him. At this Banna handed him the tablet and the stranger, merely glancing at it, deposited it inside of his own garb, and indicating to Baana to follow, passed on through the great tunnel of the gateway into the city. Once completely through the gate, and inside of the walls, Baana noticed that he was in a part of the city which was not built up with houses or shops, but that a great quantity of stone and timbers hewn and otherwise prepared to be put in place in buildings, were piled round about.

The stranger in blue led Baana along the main thoroughfare for a time and then took him to one side through a narrow opening between the piles of structural material, Baana following with some uneasiness. After a time, when entirely beyond earshot of everyone, the stranger motioned to Baana

to be seated beside him on a huge stone and proceeded to open the conversation.

"Whence comest thou?" inquired the beadsman.

"From the further side of the river Jordan," replied Baana, "where my father herds his flocks in a wady let down to the Jordan's banks from the Assyrian desert."

The beadsman reached into the bosom of his jacket, pulled out the tablet which had been handed him by Baana and studied it intently.

"So," said he, "thou hast decided to serve in the building of the great Temple?"

"I have," replied Baana.

"And what knowledge hast thou of the many arts and crafts necessary to those who serve in the erection of the Temple?"

"I have but little experience in building, but have had the opportunity of studying under a good priest who lives in a stone hovel in the wady next our own. He taught me to read and write in Hebrew, Assyrian and other tongues and, beyond that, I have acquired such knowledge as the good priest had of building. At one time I thought this knowledge was considerable, but since my journey to Jerusalem and, especially after I have been admitted within the walls of the city and beheld some of its great buildings, even though at a distance, I see that the good priest was inexperienced in large structures."

"Then," said the beadsman, "dost intend to serve as a burden-bearer about the Temple?"

"No," answered Baana, "while my knowledge is scant and my skill less, I intend learning in the same way that others have gained their knowledge, or by any way that offers. It is said the number of hewers is great, and by whatever means they acquired their handicraft, even by the same, I shall become skilled."

"But," said the beadsman, "it will take a long time for thee to earn wages at a trade which thou art only learning, and upon what wilt thou subsist in the meantime?"

"I am strong and energetic and I shall apply myself with greater energy than most and will fit myself for the work in less time than usual. As to my means of subsistence I cannot say, but I have faith that if I strive earnestly to accomplish this great purpose, means will be found to sustain me until the goal is reached."

"That is well said," spake the beadsman, "and it is in my power to aid thee both in fitting thyself for the work of a fellow-craft and also in providing thee with food and raiment while thou art doing so. There is a multitude of men employed upon the Temple and also great numbers work at other places preparing the stones and timber, the copper and brass and other material to be used in its construction, and there are many ways in which a strong and energetic young man may be of service while he is fitting himself for the task which thou seekest; but first, before thou canst be employed upon, or about, the Temple, thou must be inducted into a portion of the mysteries of the Fraternity with which all workmen upon the Temple must affiliate. Hast heard of it?"

"Yes," answered Baana; "my teacher, the good priest, told me that it is with the king's knowledge and direction, and therefore can be only for good purposes, and I shall hasten to unite with it if I am accepted."

"Then," said the beadsman, "It shall be my good fortune to afford thee assistance. I shall provide thee with lodging for the present and thou shalt dine of good fare; but I have some matters to attend to before I can proceed further with thee. Canst thou find thy way back to this place at the setting of the sun?"

Baana studied the surroundings carefully and fixed in his mind by certain piles of structural stones and timbers and the foundation work of the great Temple how he could return to it.

"Yes," said Baana; "I can return to this place when the sun has passed beyond the western wall of the city, as I will be careful not to go anywhere out of sight of the top of this mountain."

"Then," said the beadsman, "return here at sunset and if I am absent, await my coming."

At that the beadsman left Baana seated on the great stone and returned toward the sheep gate.

Baana reflected upon his experiences for some time. It was his first acquaintance with a city or even hamlet of any kind, and everything was new and strange and much of it puzzling; yet he was naturally quick-witted, well-educated for his time, and determined to acquire a knowledge of the ways of the world that he might better be prepared to fulfill the station in life which he desired to attain.

But this stranger whom he had fallen in with and who seemed friendly and desirous of advancing Baana's interest, troubled him in many ways. He was clearly not of the Hebrew race. His complexion was more swarthy than that of a Hebrew and his hair was even darker and straighter. His features were more square-cut and his accent was strange and unusual. Baana had never heard anything like it. He was clearly from distant lands and yet he spoke Hebrew perfectly and could read writing in a language totally unknown to Baana, as witness the tablet of the horseman.

Baana was certain that he could not be a beadsman, as his manner was that of one in authority instead of the cringing air usually adopted by the professional beggar.

What possible reason could this beadsman have for interesting himself in Baana's affairs and, for that matter, what reason had the horseman to send Baana to the beadsman? Could they both be officers under the Master Builder of the Temple, or were they connected with the rulers of the empire? If not, who and what were they?

Baana thought intently upon these matters and then aroused himself with a start. The accent of the beadsmen, he now recalled, was almost the same as that of the horse-

man. Each spoke perfect Hebrew, and yet so precisely and carefully did they enunciate their words and syllables that it was clear that Hebrew was not their native tongue and, now that he thought of it, there was a remarkable resemblance between the horseman and the man who accosted him at the sheep gate. They both were tall, unusually dark and had square-cut features. At this point Baana's thoughts would go no further. There was nothing for them to work on, and so after a little time he moved slowly southward and finally passed into the heart of the city.

Jerusalem has always been a peculiar city, differing materially from any other city in the world. As cities number in population in the present history of the world's development, Jerusalem is not large. The site of the ancient city at the time of which we speak comprised but little more than twelve hundred acres of land. A very much larger area, however, was enclosed within its walls.

A thousand years before the Christian era, Jerusalem was right in the central highway between the great civilizations of Mesopotamia (which means between the rivers) on the east and the civilization which had been countless centuries developing along the river Nile to the southwest. The great Arabian desert, which lies between the site of the ancient city of Babylon and the valley of the Nile, was then, as now, practically impassable except for the Bedouins, those wild denizens of the desert, who made it their home. Kings of Babylon, who were constantly seeking to reduce Egypt to the condition of a vassal country must, because of the physical barrier of the desert, move their armies and supplies northerly and northwesterly along the Euphrates and Tigris rivers until they were within reach of Palestine; then southerly through Palestine along the eastern coast of the Mediterranean, or Great Sea, striking Egypt at or near the mouth of the river Nile. In turn, the Pharaohs and monarchs of Egypt followed the same course in the opposite direction when warring upon Babylon.

The city of Jerusalem, being in the very centre of this

great pathway throughout the passing of the centuries, was almost constantly in the vortex of the turmoil when these two countries east and west of it were at war with each other.

In the time of David and Solomon there were seen upon the streets of Jerusalem inhabitants of every country of the world as known at that time. The Phoenicians from the north, the Byzantines from the far north, the Babylonians from the east and the Indians and Mongolians from the far east, the swarthy Moor from Morocco and the Blackamoor from Ethiopia, the sailor from Rhodes and from far distant parts, the barbarian from beyond the Ural Mountains, and people in every kind of dress, speaking every language and dialect, trafficked with each other and jostled elbows in the streets of Jerusalem. It was then, and has always been, one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. At that time a man's nationality was indicated by his religion, and not by the place of his birth. Everybody had some religion or something which he regarded as a religion. The habits and religions of the cosmopolitan multitude that swept to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem had a peculiar effect upon the inhabitants of the city as well as upon the transient sojourners themselves.

The Hebrews were the first people in the world to establish a monotheistic religion, as will be shown hereafter. The intermingling of races leaving at first friction and, later, tolerance of all the religions of the world in the city of Jerusalem, had the effect of impressing the Hebrews and their religion with a breadth and liberality which nothing else could ever have done. No people can evolve a system of religion, however greatly they may be inspired, which is superior in morals to their own morality. The breadth and magnanimity of the Christian religion but reflects the reaction of all religions in the world upon the Hebrew mind.

The city of Jerusalem at this time was the centre and the

melting-pot for every religion in the known world and, for this reason, it was called the Holy City.

The greatness, power and influence of Jerusalem therefore, was out of all proportion to its size and population. It will be remembered that it was called the Holy City a thousand years before Christ walked its streets. Into this maelstrom of human beings, ideas and religions, Baana soon lost his identity and did not again return to the meeting place with the beadsman until the sun had nearly touched the western wall and the long shadows of the night were stretching their dusky fingers across the city.

THE FOUNDATION

EXPLANATION OF PLATE NO. 3

This plate represents Solomon's Temple and auxiliary buildings as developed in a model by the English freemasons who devoted years to the work and it is believed have made as near a reproduction of the original as can ever be made.

The grounds covered by the Temple and its structures included twenty-five acres.

The arched way in the lower left foreground is the bridge over the Tyroppeon Valley by which the Temple enclosure was entered from the city of Jerusalem.

The large building in the lower left foreground below the bridge is the palace of the ranking queen.

The building at the end of the bridge is the "House of the Forest of Lebanon" occupied by Solomon's other wives.

The domed building in the central foreground with a portion of the roof around the dome shaped like points of a star is Solomon's judgment hall.

The terraced buildings in the lower right foreground were stables for the royal horses, camels, dromedaries, and elephants used in sacred pageants and also housed the animals used for the religious sacrifices.

The building in the right foreground above the stables is Solomon's palace.

The large court extending across the central foreground, beyond which appear double doorways through the great wall, is the court of the gentiles or all persons not of Hebrew faith. The gentiles could not pass beyond the double arches.

The smaller court in the center beyond the great wall pierced with three double arches is the outer court of the Temple.

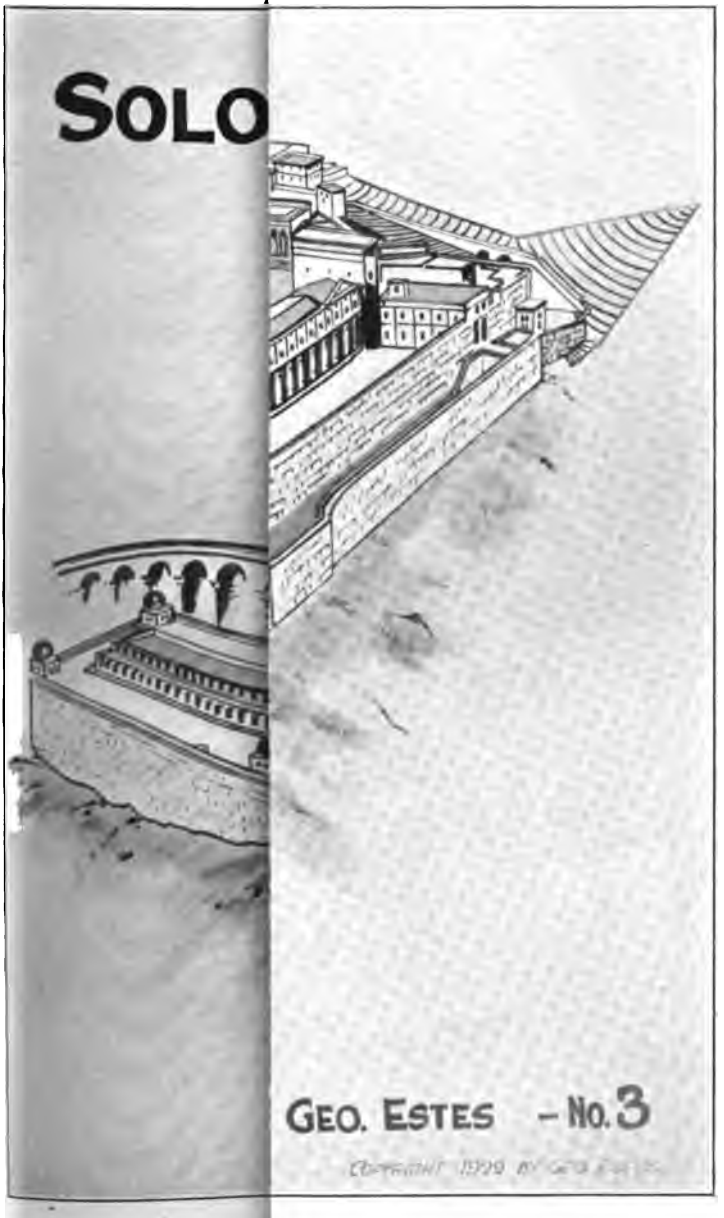
On the circular stairway leading up toward the left from this court to the great arch in the dividing wall between the courts there were fifteen steps passing up which the psalm of life was chanted. After passing through this arch the court of the priests is entered, in the center of which stood the great altar, on which the burnt offerings were sacrificed. This altar stands in front of the entrance to the Temple proper. At each side of the entrance, to the Temple itself, stand the great brazen pillars, Jachin and Boaz.

Inside the Temple was the sacred place, the Holy of Holies, in which was the Ark of the Covenant, the golden candlestick for seven candles, and the tables of shewbread. The Holy of Holies could be entered only by the consecrated high priest and by him but once a year, blindfolded and walking backwards.

The Temple was overlaid with plates of gold, inside and out, requiring in money of the present time fifteen million dollars for the inside and eighty-five million dollars for the outside, one hundred million dollars in all for that purpose alone.

The building in the extreme upper left is the House of Millo.

The stairway in the extreme upper right leads to the great Haram Tower not shown in this plate.



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TIBETAN FOUNDATIONS

CHAPTER IV.

The Temple

Much literature has been turned loose upon the world, explaining and describing King Solomon's Temple and the various buildings and structures connected with it. The purpose of this book is not to give tiresome and detailed descriptions and measurements, as those are matters which can be obtained from current Masonic histories with respect to this wonderful structure and the buildings connected with it.

It would be impossible, however, to write this story without more or less reference to the most famous structural work of ancient times.

Much in the way of loose assertions has been spread broadcast with respect to this great cathedral, and it has been customary in many quarters to make statements in regard to the Temple which are not borne out by authentic records of ancient times and modern investigations.

The writer has no intention of indulging in extravagant figures or statistics regarding it. However, it can be said that famous students and archeologists have been collecting information about the Temple by every means known for so long a period that reasonable certainty has been reached regarding all of the dimensions of the Temple and of everything of importance which it contained; and of all of the structures, stairways, columns, colonnades, arches, palaces and subsidiary buildings in the Temple enclosure.

The Temple itself, with its attendant buildings and structures, was undoubtedly the greatest structural and architectural work of ancient times or even of the middle ages, if not the mightiest work of all time. It is definitely known as to the number of men employed in the construc-

tion of the Temple and Temple buildings. These numbers come to us in so many different ways, both sacred and secular, that there can be no doubt of their accuracy. The main Temple itself was seven years in building, during all of which period "there was not heard the sound of axe, hammer or any tool of iron" in or about it; but the auxiliary buildings and structures connected with the Temple required twenty-one years for their completion and the inhibition of the Holy Word against the use of metallic tools in constructing the Temple proper did not apply to the rest of the Temple buildings and there was, therefore, great activity, bustle and noise throughout the Temple Square while the rest of the structures were proceeding to completion.

For the sake of accuracy, and to call attention to a mistake, or rather, an omission among the Fraternity in modern times, the workmen upon and about the Temple will be briefly enumerated. There were seventy thousand Ish Sabbal or burden-bearers, all of whom were the remainder of the old Canaanites, who had occupied the land of Canaan before it fell under the rule of the Israelites; eighty thousand Giblim, inhabitants of the city of Gebal, called fellow-crafts, whose particular duty it was to hew and shape the stones in the quarries and carve the wood on the mountains; a special levy of thirty thousand men, who were sent under Adoniram to the Mountains of Lebanon, to fell the cedar and fir trees with the assistance of the Phoenicians under Hiram, King of Tyre, whose number is unknown to us. They felled and hewed the timber in the mountains of Lebanon and moved it to the sea coast, where it was transported on floats by sea to Joppa, which was then, and still is, the seaport for the city of Jerusalem, three hundred furlongs distant.

Besides the seventy thousand bearers of burden, eighty thousand hewers, and the king's levy of thirty thousand men, there were three thousand, three hundred Menatzchim or expert masters, who were overseers of the one hundred and eighty thousand men. This altogether makes one

hundred and eighty-three thousand and three hundred men; but there was an additional group of men in authority over the three thousand, three hundred overseers, or masters, who seem always to be overlooked in Masonic works, and these men were three hundred in number, known as Harodim and are in Holy Writ called Princes of the Temple. They were taken from the Menatzchim who had filled their allotted time as Masters of Assemblies. The most careful investigations made by students of Masonry have resulted in the conviction that these three hundred men, designated Princes of the Work, who were superior to the three thousand three hundred Master Masons, or overseers, were none other than the Past Masters of the various Lodges, or groups of the workmen in this vast undertaking. These, with the three ancient Grand Masters, amount in all to one hundred eighty-three thousand, six hundred and three men who were employed in and about this vast undertaking. But there is no special record, at least none which has ever yet been found, of the men furnished King Solomon in this work by Hiram, King of Tyre and, as far as yet known, no means of even estimating the number of those men have come to Masonic antiquarians, or archeologists engaged in the work of acquiring a full knowledge of this great structure.

Besides this vast army of workmen there were employed in and about the Temple, carvers, gilders, artists, workers in precious stones, makers of the priestly garments of which there were vast numbers, being all sacerdotal garments which belonged to the high priests with the long robes and the jewelled breast plates; one thousand garments for the priests, of fine linen with purple girdles; more than ten thousand brazen trumpets used in and about the Temple and its auxiliary buildings; more than two hundred thousand garments for the great choir of Levites; more than two hundred thousand musical instruments especially designed and worked out for the singing of hymns and for use with the great choir, all of burnished brass; besides large numbers

of other instruments and equipment. In the Book of Chronicles it is stated that the Holy Temple, meaning of course, the Temple proper and not including its attendant buildings, was overlaid with gold. The quantity of gold used in what was called the Oracle, or Holy of Holies, amounted to six hundred Jewish talents, and in the outer part of the building two thousand and seven hundred Jewish talents. The Babylonian gold talent was a double unit of monetary value, the heavy talent being worth thirty thousand dollars of United States money of the present day, and the light talent being worth fifteen thousand dollars. The Jewish talent equaled the Babylonian heavy talent of thirty thousand dollars. From this it will be seen that the gold used in the Oracle was worth fifteen million, three hundred thousand dollars, United States money and the gold in the other part of the Temple was worth eighty-one million eight hundred thousand dollars; in all approximately one hundred million dollars in gold alone was used in and about the Temple. There were, however, some other remarkable figures in connection with this mighty system of structures, to-wit: the pouring vessels for incense numbered eighty thousand; other golden vessels about the Temple one hundred thousand; silver vessels two hundred thousand; golden dishes for offering fine flour especially in connection with the shew bread, eighty thousand; silver dishes for other purposes, one hundred thousand; large gold basins for flour and oil, sixty thousand; similar basins of silver, one hundred and twenty thousand; measures of gold, ten thousand; measures of silver, forty thousand; gold censers to carry incense to the altar, twenty thousand; other censers, fifty thousand.

Besides all this staggering array of wealth, there were castings of brass made in the clay grounds of the first bench of the Jordan's banks in such numerous quantities for the Temple that the Holy Writ tells us the weight thereof was never found out. In addition to the other wealth there were quantities of robes not already mentioned, jeweled breast-

plates of the High Priests, the filagree work of gold, silver and precious stones about the altar and the Temple proper, amounting to fabulous figures.

All of this stupendous accumulation of riches, included with the vast expense of the overwhelming army of workmen connected with the building of the Temple, brings the cost of that structure up to such enormous figures it seems that all of the coined money in the world would not be sufficient to pay the bill.

Among the most important things in connection with King Solomon's Temple and one the least treated of is the large number of buildings auxiliary to the Temple itself and enclosed within the Temple grounds.

Some of these buildings will have much to do with this narrative and their uses and purposes will unfold as the story proceeds. At this time suffice it to say that in the Temple grounds round about the Temple itself were buildings, palaces, arches, colonnades, columns and stairways for one purpose and another, in such numbers as to bewilder the mind. A few of them will be noticed here. The main entrance to the Temple grounds was reached by a great bridge over the Tyropoeon valley. Inside the Temple grounds was located the House of the Forest of Lebanon (I Kings VII, 2-20). This house was so called because it was built upon sixty cedar piles in a low place on Mount Moriah, and required this piling to bring it up to a proper elevation. These cedar piles came from the forest of Lebanon; hence the name. The building was the palace and residence of all of King Solomon's wives, save and except his queen, who might be designated as his official wife. The judgment hall, in which was the throne of the king, was also located in the Temple grounds and so was the king's palace.

The palace of his queen, or official wife, was a magnificent structure located in the Temple grounds, and near enough to the royal stables which housed the animals that were slaughtered in sacrificial services for the queen and occupants of her palace to see these animals led forth for

slaughter upon the altars of the Hebrews. Among the sacrificial animals which passed before the queen's palace on their way to the sacrifice were many bulls which were worshipped by the queen and her Egyptian retainers, which widened the breach between the king and his queen until it culminated in the great catastrophe related further along in these chapters.

Solomon's queen was an Egyptian princess, a daughter of Shishak, the first king of the twenty-second dynasty of Egypt. The union between King Solomon and this princess was for political purposes and in the hopes of bringing about a closer friendship between the two kingdoms according to the custom of monarchs. This princess, when she came from Egypt to Palestine to become King Solomon's queen, brought with her many court officials, heathen priests and personal attendants. King Solomon conferred upon her the city of Gezer in the southern part of the land of Ephraim, as her dowry (II Kings, 1-16). The wedding was held in the city of Jerusalem and was of great magnificence. It is referred to in the forty-fifth Psalm. Hiram, King of Tyre, sent many costly presents by his daughter and her retinue to Jerusalem for the occasion; and the kings round about, who were friendly to Solomon, Hiram of Tyre and Shishak of Egypt, attended or sent representatives to the wedding with presents of immense value.

The glory of the court of King Solomon at this time had no parallel, either before or since, in the history of the Israelites, and has scarcely been equalled by the court of any other monarch in ancient or modern times.

Bewildered by the strange and unfamiliar scenes in Jerusalem, Baana ventured but a little distance into the city beyond the Temple grounds, drinking in the strange sights, gazing at the wonderful shops, the tradesmen and the strange garb and dress of those from foreign lands. The great wealth of many of the people seen in the streets of the city and the greater poverty of many others all formed

such a startling picture to Baana that he consumed his time until the setting of the sun in trying to accustom himself to it.

Feeling the vital necessity of meeting his new acquaintance, the beadsman, at the time stated, he constantly watched the moving of the sun toward the west. When it appeared to him that he had ample time, and perhaps no more than that, to return to the meeting place, he faced toward the sheep gate of the city and eventually found his way back to the designated place. After waiting there a short time until the shadows of the western wall and hilltops had spread the curtains of night over the city, he observed a number of figures approaching through the gloom; shortly the beadsman, with four or five others, arrived.

He accosted Baana somewhat brusquely, as the latter thought, and bade him follow. Falling in with the others, Baana kept pace with the little party under the beadsman's leadership until they left the Temple grounds and, turning towards the west kept in a general direction parallel with the northern wall of the city. Presently they came to a great number of people passing to and fro in two endless streams, one flowing toward the north and the other toward the south. These people all appeared to be of a certain calling which, at first, was not clear to Baana, who had been reared entirely inland and had never seen the ocean and no water of any importance outside of the river Jordan. As no one in the little party appeared to be doing any talking, Baana held his own counsel and soon discovered that the greater portion of these people were either fishermen or fish vendors and later he learned that this stream was flowing in and out of a great gate in the northern wall known as the fish gate. Gradually it dawned upon Baana that each of the great gates of the city were for specified purposes or classes of traffic and he soon reasoned out the purpose as heretofore explained, why these great gateways were limited to certain people.

The beadsman and his little group passed through the stream of fishermen and fish vendors and traveled steadily on into the night, finally reaching another gate known as the old, or Damascus gate. All was strange to Baana and he could not fathom the purposes of the beadsman; but determined that his best interests lay in following him, although he continually felt a certain amount of uneasiness which he could not explain nor reason away. Night had now absolutely fallen, and the only light in the ancient city was that made by the artificial means used at that time. The great gates of the city had been closed, barred and double-locked for the night. The beadsman, however, appeared to have a knowledge of the city and its walls and gateways which was amazing. He signified to his group of followers that they must at this place pass out of the city through its walls. The great gate was firmly locked and bolted at the inner end of its vaulted passage and was, doubtless, so locked and bolted at the outer end. The beadsman, however, instead of attempting to make his way through the great portals into the vaulted gateway, turned to the right as he approached the entrance to the gate and, feeling along the inside of the ancient city wall, located something which appeared to give him satisfaction. At this time he produced from under the blue blouse which he wore an enclosed lamp of scraped horn which was already burning, but which had been kept covered and concealed in such a way that its presence could not be ascertained by anyone not knowing that it was on his person.

By the aid of this light he located a great copper knob, green with age, projecting from the wall. Seizing the knob with both hands and pulling upon it with all his might, it moved outward slowly until a copper rod the thickness of a man's arm at the elbow projected out of the wall a distance of two cubits, the copper knob being the end of this bolt when it was in place, pushed back into the wall.

Motioning to two of his companions to take hold with him upon the right, they all pushed sideways against it and

slowly a counterbalanced door of massive stone mounted upon copper gudgeons swung outward, making an opening sufficient for a man comfortably to pass through. He indicated to Baana and the others with him that they were to pass into the opening. This they did, followed by the beadsman. When inside, the beadsman laid hold of a similar knob on the inside of the stone door and pulled it inward. This proved to be the other end of the copper bar which projected through the door. Having pulled the bar inward as far as it would come, by means of it the door was swung back into position, concealing the entrance or opening in the wall. By the light of his dim lamp the beadsman then led the way through long passages, most of them inclining downward, until Baana was quite sure that they were in the bowels of the earth. In time they came to large caverns excavated in the solid stone, on the floors of which were blocks of stone of all sizes and shapes and in all stages of workmanship, from the rough ashlar to the perfect ashlar and keystone. Baana looked upon the finished stones with great interest, and attempted to decipher the marks of the craftsmen upon them, desiring to be able to prepare them himself in the shortest possible time.

They were now in the royal quarries of the King of Palestine, from which the stone was being quarried and in which the blocks were shaped for the great Temple. This stone was very remarkable. It was what is known as malaki, and when first excavated was soft and easily hewn and carved, but upon exposure to the air it became intensely hard and enduring. It was very beautiful, of rich grey and faultless in all respects for the construction of the mighty Temple and the majestic buildings surrounding it.

The beadsman, however, was apparently not interested in the quarries, nor the great stones which were being hewn and shaped therein. He passed rapidly through the larger cavern and on through many corridors and, finally, through tunnels which appeared to be unused, until he came to where

the passageway was blocked by what appeared to be a wall of masonry across it.

In front of this wall he lifted a cunningly concealed trap-door which disclosed a slanting shaft with ladder-like steps cut on the upper side of the slant. He signified to his companions, including Baana, that they were to descend this slanting stairway. After he had passed down he closed the trap-door overhead and fastened it with hasp and staple on the inside. At the bottom of the shaft they entered a corridor which soon gave into a spacious, dimly lighted chamber in the center of which was a large and very long stone block about the height and width of an ordinary table, with stone benches at each side of it.

Signaling the party to be seated at this stone table, the beadsman placed himself opposite them and proceeded to explain his strange actions and indicate to them what was expected of them.

He said:

"We have passed through the royal quarries of the king, in which are quarried and carved the stones that are to be laid up in the Temple and the other buildings connected with it.

"The secret entrance to the quarries through a concealed gateway beside the Damascus gate is known to the king and the Masters of the Work, so that they may reach the quarries quickly in that way, if desired. The general entrance to the quarries, however, is through a large portal constantly guarded outside of the Damascus gate of the city walls, and through that portal the stones are taken and are then drawn through the great gate and to the Haram district to be there used in the erection of the Temple and other buildings.

"The secret chamber in which we now are, however, is known only to the members of the Great Fraternity which controls the work, and is used for a certain purpose which will now be disclosed to you."

CHAPTER V.

The Great Fraternity

The beadsman now closely questioned each of the party who had followed him into this concealed chamber, and made a record of the answers upon a roll of papyrus. When he came to Baana in his examination, he passed quickly and rapidly over Baana's life and history in the little wady beyond the Jordan. While none of the others could read or write Hebrew nor any other language, Baana could both read and write Hebrew, Assyrian and other languages with ease, and possessed a smattering of many tongues. Apparently the beadsman's suspicions were aroused in the case of Baana, and he questioned him closely as to how he had obtained this knowledge. Baana told of the schooling under the Hebrew priest; but even then the beadsman seemed reluctant to believe that Baana could thus have acquired so much education, unusual at that time. After finishing the examination the beadsman inquired carefully of each one what he sought to do about the great Temple, as it appeared that all of them, like Baana, had traveled to Jerusalem for the purpose of finding employment in or about the Temple. Except Baana, they all expressed their willingness to work on anything which might be put before them; each and every one offering to do the fetching and carrying about the Temple or the quarries at the most menial work which could be had, but Baana stoutly protested that he desired to fit himself with despatch for employment as a hewer of stone or wood, preferably of wood. The beadsman had dismissed the others from his mind with the simple statement that he would see to it that they were entered apprentices after they had taken certain oaths and been inducted through certain ceremonies. He attempted

however, to induce Baana to fall into the same class with the others, but without avail. Baana contended that he had already fitted himself to begin the work of a hewer, or carver, and that with a little more instructions and an opportunity to develop his skill, he could soon equal any about the Temple.

The beadsman, seeing that Baana could not be talked out of his purpose, said that he would arrange that the opportunity be furnished him to fit himself as a carver of stone, marble, and cedar wood.

The beadsman then inquired of each one present if he had any knowledge of the Great Fraternity which enrolled as its members the bulk of the workmen connected with the Temple. None of them, except Baana, had more than a dim realization that such an institution existed. Baana, however, being possessed of an inquiring mind and who, through the teachings of the Hebrew priest and other sources, had acquired some knowledge of the Fraternity and expressed his great desire to become a member of it immediately, and this desire he made known of his own free will without suggestion from the beadsman. The others displayed little interest; but when told by the beadsman that they could not advance except as members of the Fraternity, submitted, as they would have done with respect to any other ordinary condition required of them before they could be employed.

After the beadsman's examination of the persons accompanying him, he gave them a discourse, advising that they must that very night make their start in the membership of the Fraternity and that they should carry out strictly all instructions given them by the leaders who were in authority.

Having received the assent from all present to unite with the Fraternity, the beadsman then swore them all to an oath of secrecy. Then he bade one follow him, and went to a closet hewn in the stone of the cavern's wall, and from it took various kinds of food and several skin or leathern

bottles filled with water and wine. The food and drink was placed by the beadsman and those assisting him, upon the stone table in the centre of the room, and he told the group of men to devour it with as little delay as possible. After all had satisfied their hunger, the leathern bottles and remainder of the food were replaced in the closet and the door was closed.

The beadsman then said that they should all follow him and, approaching the wall of the cavern in a different place, with a setting-maul made of heavy oaken wood he hammered upon the wall, using a certain number of strokes, all of which was carefully noted by Baana. This appeared to be answered from within, although the door was so thick that the raps on the inside of it were heard but faintly. Again the beadsman rapped but this time the signals were different. After he had finished, a muffled voice came from beyond the wall speaking in a language unknown to Baana. The beadsman answered in the same manner and after a short wait a great stone door opened inward. Signalling to the men to follow him, the beadsman passed through the doorway and when all were in, the door slowly swung shut behind them. Baana noted that they had come into a rather small room lighted by dimly burning lamps hanging from the ceiling, and that there were stone benches next to the wall, entirely around the room. He noticed also that upon these benches sat a number of persons doubtless in the same situation as himself and the others accompanying him. The beadsman said that the neophytes must now give up their pouches and weapons but might have them back when they returned to that chamber. When Baana heard this order, he quickly removed the chain and amulet from his neck and concealed it in a loaf of bread in his skin pouch. The beadsman motioned to some waiting attendants and they immediately took charge of Baana and the others of the party, drew them to one side and provided them with black cowls which were placed over their heads and fastened securely around their necks. These cowls permitted no light to pass through

them, nor were there any holes or apertures through which the wearer could observe anything around him. Their hands were tied behind their backs; they were stripped of their pouches and weapons and were somewhat rudely pushed down upon the benches and told to wait. From that time on Baana's only method of gaining a knowledge of what went on around him was by the sounds which reached his ears through the inky blackness of the heavy cowl. At frequent intervals he heard the door open, and imagined that one of the hooded or cowled persons was taken through it, and then the massive stone door grated into position again.

Finally he was roughly seized by each arm and hauled through the door which closed as soon as he passed through. Once inside a voice, speaking in Hebrew with the strange accent he had heard from the beadsman, solemnly instructed him, and the cowl was removed. He found himself in a large lighted stone chamber with vaulted ceiling, containing many persons. It took a short time for him to become accustomed to the light. Lectures were then made to him and the other neophytes particularly with respect to absolute obedience to the orders and commands which would, from time to time, be given them by those in the Fraternity who had advanced to higher planes.

Baana noticed with a feeling of uneasiness that the person who gave the instructions was concealed and the voice had the same foreign accent as that of the beadsman and, again, it occurred to Baana that it also resembled the accent of the horseman at the ford of the river Jordan.

After long and unintelligible instructions, as Baana thought, the voice became silent and an officer at the opposite end of the chamber began to talk. His voice was familiar to Baana and his face, it seemed, was that of one Baana had known before. He was clad in a long robe of fine texture, the materials of which were unknown to Baana; but he adjudged it to be costly and deemed it to betoken high office. It was blue of color, but bore a black border or facing, around the bottom and up and down the front openings,

similar to the lattice border made upon the camlet of the horseman encountered by Baana at the ford of the Jordan. Baana noticed that around his neck and outside of his robe there rested upon his shoulders a heavy silver chain, the links of which were square, and that over his breast suspended from the chain, was a very beautiful ornament or amulet, of massive silver. This jewel appeared to Baana to be suspended by the middle and to extend horizontally across the wearer's breast. It was, as Baana adjudged, about eighteen barleycorns in length and was curiously ornamented on its upper edge and particularly on the upward bend of the silver bar to which was attached the silver chain which supported it. It was divided into three parts of about equal length, the middle part being curved upward, forming the arc of a circle and from each end of the arc extended a bar to the right and left, the two bars being in a direct line with each other. From the centre of the arc was suspended a silver chain with links formed differently from the square links around the wearer's neck. This chain terminated in a silver ball which Baana noticed did not reach far enough down to come within a direct line of the two straight bars. He was greatly impressed with the massive chain and the beautiful jewel suspended from it.

He was puzzled, however, because of the familiarity of the speaker's voice and of that portion of his face which he could see. Presently the whole matter became clear. This officer, who sat upon a raised platform reached by two steps from the floor of the vaulted chamber, was none other than the beadsman who had met him at the sheep gate of Jerusalem and had escorted him and the others through the secret passage to the royal quarries and thence to the place where Baana now found himself. It was as he had thought; the beadsman was not a professional beggar, as his ragged clothes of blue, worn in the daytime, indicated; but he was some sort of a high officer in connection with the kingdom or the Fraternity into which Baana was now being inducted. He observed also that the links of the massive silver chain

about his neck were of the same pattern and weight as those of the chain worn by the horseman at the ford of the Jordan. It was clear now that there was some connection between these men.

The person who had first delivered instructions to Baana and his comrades, while they wore the cowls over their heads and even after the cowls had been removed, had not yet been seen by Baana because he spoke from behind a thin veil, and from a raised platform as Baana thought; this veil being so thin that it did not deaden the voice of the speaker in the least, but made it impossible for those outside the veil to see in. The veil itself was a mystery and a work of art such as Baana did not dream existed. While its meshes were large enough to permit the speaker's voice to pass through readily, the slender threads of which it was woven were of different colors and were so interlaced as to make a very beautiful representation upon the side turned outward of a great Temple with towers reaching upward to the sky. Baana studied this intently and concluded that it might be a representation of the Temple of Jehovah now building on the summit of Mount Moriah.

Baana and the others were told by the beadsman in his new role that the Fraternity embraced within its membership practically all of the workers in and about the Temple, in the royal quarries, in the clay grounds where the holy vessels and other ornaments of the Temple were being cast, and in the mountains of Lebanon where the fir trees and cedar trees were being cut and hewn into shape for use about the Temple.

It was explained that this Fraternity was necessary to hold the workmen together and keep out interlopers who might cause dissatisfaction among them, and to increase the skill of its members as craftsmen and to insure their loyalty.

Unlike the others with him, Baana had, as before stated, acquired a considerable knowledge of the Great Fraternity embracing within its membership the Temple builders. He

had hoped, before leaving the hovel of his father, to become a member of it and to rise in its ranks while he also acquired skill and advanced in the work as a Temple builder himself.

Notwithstanding he had no personal knowledge of fraternities of any kind, he had acquired much respect for the Fraternity of Temple builders and looked upon it as something exalted in its character and purposes. While the initiation and instruction through which he had just passed seemed to be of importance and was accepted by his companions as the perfection of their ideals in that regard, to Baana's keen and incisive mind, there was something lacking about everything that he had passed through. To his attentive ears the instructions of the leaders of the assemblage did not ring true. The morals and teachings inculcated by the words of the leader appeared to Baana to come from his lips alone and not from his heart. In fact, Baana began to suspect, in his inexperienced mind, that he had been the victim of some sort of a combination of an unknown character which was not for any good purpose, but was used for the selfish ends of the horseman, the beadsman and perhaps for the voice from behind the veil.

At this moment the great stone door through which Baana believed he had made his entrance into the assembly room opened, and a line of persons came through it all cowled and with their hands bound behind their backs as were Baana and those accompanying him, when they passed through. Baana noticed with astonishment, that they were led by a tall man with swarthy complexion, black hair and eyebrows, who was none other than the horseman who had met him at the ford of the river Jordan. He felt his suspicions of a few moments before verified by the appearance of the horseman. He was now intensely mystified and wondered if the whole proceedings were true or false. The horseman was now dressed differently, and but for the fact that Baana had recognized the beadsman in his beautiful robe, he might have been at a loss as to the identity of the

horseman. He was assisted, however, at once in determining that this new figure was the horseman, because of the silver chain and jewel which appeared around his neck and upon his breast outside of the robe. The robe was blue and appeared to be of the same texture of fine goods as that worn by the beadsman. It also was bordered up and down the front and around the bottom in rich black facing of the same design as that of the beadsman. Upon the entrance of the horseman Baana observed that those present, except the newly initiated, arose to their feet, evidently being called up by certain signals which Baana did not understand, and gestures and signs in token of obedience were made in salutation of the horseman. After he had placed those who entered with him to his satisfaction, he ascended a platform at one side of the chamber which was reached by one step from the floor, and seated himself in a great stone chair in front of which was a beautifully carved pedestal of white marble. Baana observed that the beadsman was seated in a similar stone chair and that in front of him also stood a marble pedestal with its top, or capital, beautifully carved, but with a different design from the carved capital of the pedestal in front of the horseman's seat. The voice from behind the veil welcomed the horseman in beautiful and stately language and addressed him by the name of Akirop. To this the horseman replied in language equally stately, addressing the veiled voice by the name of Metusael.

After Akirop had finished his address to Metusael, he then faced toward the opposite end of the chamber and, addressing the beadsman by the name of Fanor, saluted him and in every manner indicated his respect for him.

Thereafter, other inferior officers proceeded with the work of inducting the newly admitted neophytes into membership.

Baana watched this installation with care and learned much of it by rote, but was disappointed with it as it seemed insincere. He felt that if it really was a part of the Great Fraternity's ceremonies, that it fell far short of his ideals.

Shortly afterward the assembly was disbanded and minor officers gathered up the newly made members and took them to various places where they were provided with simple accommodations in the older parts of the royal quarries, in which they could sleep for the rest of the night and thereafter until their sleeping places might be changed. They were told to report the following morning at certain parts of the quarries, the Temple grounds, and other places where work was being carried on with respect to furnishings and equipment of the Temple and its buildings. Baana was instructed to report to the beadsman at the sheep gate of the city and he would there receive instructions enabling him to commence his study of wood carving.

Baana's sleeping place consisted of a cot hewn from solid stone and placed against an underground wall in a great chamber of the royal quarries directly opposite a small air shaft which had been bored through the wall a distance of many cubits to the outer world, through which a soft current of fresh air was admitted into the quarries. This air shaft, though of some size, was not large enough to admit the body of a man, Baana noticed; therefore no exit to or from the great quarries could be had through it. He resolved to ascertain where it came out upon the surface of the ground and to make certain that small prowling animals could not find their way into his sleeping place through it while he slept.

His bed upon the stone cot was made of straw, covered over with untanned skins of domestic animals. It was not very attractive even to one of the simple tastes of Baana. It was, however, comfortable and warm, and the ventilating shaft which came through the wall at the side of the cot furnished an abundance of pure, fresh air for which he gave thanks. He wondered what the arrangements would be for water to drink and in which to wash and bathe himself, and how and in what manner his food would be furnished; but the darkness was inky black in the great cavern of the royal quarries and this side chamber was equally

dark. The attendant who had brought him to his cot had only a small taper for his own use, which gave but little light and nothing with which to furnish Baana with light. The attendant had gone and his light had disappeared as a dim speck in the darkness, and Baana had only his senses of hearing and feeling left with which to determine his surroundings.

Being satisfied that there was nothing more to be learned until morning, he made himself as comfortable as possible on his stone cot and with his mind filled with the wonders which he had seen since leaving home, he slept as only they sleep who are wearied both mentally and physically.

CHAPTER VI.

The Three Past Masters

Baana was wakened by a dim light diffused throughout the chamber in which he was sleeping and which he correctly conceived to be the breaking of the morning. He observed that this light came through the air shaft and that rays of the sun could be seen by looking through the shaft from its inner opening. By this he concluded that the shaft opened out toward the east and also knew from the same line of reasoning that the chamber hollowed in the solid stone in which his cot was located was upon the eastern side of the royal quarries. This much ascertained, he felt that he was, at least, certain of the points of the astrolabe. He dressed himself rapidly and wandered out in the dim light into the main caverns of the quarries. Here he saw indistinct figures passing to and fro rapidly, the most of them bearing lighted tapers, and it was evident that preparations were being made for the day's work in the quarries.

He enquired for water and was told that it could be found at a certain place in the quarries to which he was directed. This he discovered to be on the same side as his sleeping chamber and very close to it. Upon examination, the water proved to be a living stream pouring out of the wall where it had evidently been discovered in the excavations made by the quarrymen. The stream fell into a great basin hewn from solid stone. Baana drank of the water and found it cool and sweet. He laved himself and was then ready to hunt out the beadsman at the sheep gate. He enquired the way out of the quarries and having followed the directions given him, soon came to the great portals through which workmen were hurrying into the quarries, some on foot with

their tools in their aprons, others driving heavy carts with ponderous wheels, hauled by bullocks.

Having passed out of the portals of the quarries, he found himself upon a bench or tableland, higher than the surrounding country, and yet there was another bench to the east much higher than this one. Following the direction in which the stream of workmen were coming, he found that he was at a distance from the walls of Jerusalem, therefore, surmised that the underground passage through which he had been taken by the beadsman the night before from inside of the north wall must extend a long way from the city to the quarries. He remembered also that he and the others with him who had been taken through that passage, were all sworn to secrecy as to its existence.

Having learned the difficulty of passing through the gates of the city except that certain gate through which those of his occupation must pass, he made no attempt to enter through the gate used by the workmen; but, on the contrary, made his way to the wall of the next higher tableland, scaled it with some difficulty and traveled along the top of the tableland until he came to the sheep gate. Having arrived at this entrance-way, he soon located the beadsman who was in the arched chamber comprising the gateway, in the same position and apparently occupied in a similar manner as he was when first discovered by Baana upon the previous day.

Approaching the beadsman, who recognized him at once, he was about to speak; but the beadsman placed his finger upon his lips, indicating to Baana that he was to remain silent. Baana then stood, awaiting the beadsman's pleasure. The beadsman was at this time looking toward the outer end of the great portal of the gate and Baana's eyes, following in the same direction, saw a countryman approaching whom Baana took, from his garb and general appearance, to be a shepherd like himself. This person looked around in evident astonishment, showing clearly that he had never been to the city of Jerusalem before and, finally, his

eyes rested upon the beadsman. It was clear that he had been directed to the beadsman in the same manner as had Baana. He came forward and reaching into the bosom of his roughly made gaberdine was about to hand something to the beadsman, possibly a tablet similar to the one which the horseman at the ford had provided Baana with. The beadsman, however, motioned this newcomer to keep silent and follow him, indicating to Baana that he was to follow also, they made their way behind a large bale of earthen jars where they were somewhat hidden from the stream of people passing to and fro through the tunnel of the gate. Here the beadsman reached out his hand and the stranger handed him a tablet which the beadsman, almost without noticing, concealed in his blue blouse. Motioning both to follow, he passed on toward the city through the great arched way of the gate. Whenever the guards attempted to stop Baana or the stranger, a whisper from the beadsman halted all enquiries and thus they passed into the city.

Once inside the walls and out of the stream of people, the beadsman asked a few hurried questions of the stranger. The answers he wrote down, as in Baana's case.

The beadsman now gave Baana directions as to where to go to be supplied with food, and told him to take the newcomer with him and see that he was fed also, and directed where to send the newcomer that he might be found at sunset by the beadsman, who informed Baana that he was to join the beadsman at a certain place as soon as he had satisfied his hunger. Baana did this and so learned where food was supplied to the workmen. He also learned that the stranger entrusted to his care was named Abdamon and that he was a seafaring man whose ship had discharged him at Joppa and, being without employment upon the sea, he had come to Jerusalem to find work upon the Temple. In early life he had left his home upon the edge of the great wilderness south of Beersheba and had taken to the sea. His voyages had extended along the many coasts of the Mediterranean and, in fact, to the limits of navigation of

that time. The argosies and other merchantmen upon which he had shipped, plied usually upon the north coast of Africa, touching at Alexandria and going up the Nile to Thebes, Memphis and other points. By observation and intermingling with various nationalities, he had acquired a smattering of different tongues and dialects, although unable to read or write any language. His somewhat rough-hewn knowledge of the world was extensive and valuable. Baana discovered to his surprise that Abdamon, though unskilled in Assyrian or any of the tongues of the desert tribes to the east, had a knowledge of the languages and dialects of the maritime tribes to the west and south, and that his voyages up the River Nile and his commingling with the Egyptians and the Ethiopians still farther south, had given him a working knowledge of their tongues and also of the different languages of the nations inhabiting the northern coasts of Africa and of the islands in the Mediterranean.

Baana, being interested in his new found acquaintance, enquired of him why it was that he had come to the sheep gate of the great city. Abdamon explained that he had recently finished a cruise upon the portion of the Mediterranean known as the Great Sea; that he had shipped at Joppa for a voyage along the Phoenician coast and that, having completed his outward-bound voyage, the argosy upon which he had shipped after delivering its cargo at Zarepath, had come in ballast south to Tyre and had there taken on a cargo of beautifully woven tapestries, gold and silver cloth and other precious fabrics such as were at that time only manufactured by the Tyrians and Sidonians, and that this cargo had been consigned by the King of Tyre to Joppa to be thence transported to Jerusalem for use in the great Temple. He explained further that upon the arrival of the argosy in the roadstead at Joppa, his term of service for the ship was at an end, and his heart was bent upon working in and about the Temple, so that he set out to work his way to Jerusalem.

Falling in with some shepherds, he had remained with

them for a short time and, becoming accustomed to their garb and manners, he came on to Jerusalem as a shepherd. He avoided the Joppa gate, but skirted the walls of the city, going north till he reached the Damascus road. There he was accosted by a horseman who gave him a writing on a tablet and sent him to the sheep gate.

Baana was drawn to Abdamon, possibly, because they were both upon the same quest and both strangers in the capital city of Palestine. After considerable interchange of ideas with each other, they resolved to band themselves together for mutual support and protection. Of this mutual pact both seemed glad.

After arranging with Abdamon as to their meeting place at night, Baana betook himself to the trysting place with the beadsman who shortly after arrived. The beadsman now explained to Baana that because of his desire to fit himself for wood carving, and his ability to acquire knowledge and skill, he was now to be instructed in that work and as rapidly as possible he was to be placed over others engaged in the same line, of which there were many. The beadsman, who Baana now knew was a high officer in the Great Fraternity and who he knew bore the name of Fanor, talked very solemnly and earnestly to Baana about the position he was soon to fill, and of the number of men over whom he was to have direction. He continued by explaining to Baana that things had transpired in connection with the building of the Temple and its auxiliary palaces and structures which were not for the best interests of the king or of Palestine itself, and that this could not find favor with the Almighty. Baana was astonished at this revelation; but resolved to say nothing and to learn all he could as time went on. Fanor said that the great Temple had been prophesied by the judges and prophets of Israel ever since the Hebrews had been delivered from bondage out of Egypt half a thousand years before; that the building of the Temple and the Temple structures, the establishment of the Sanctum Sanctorum in the Temple itself in which would be placed the great altar, the

Ark of the Covenant, and the tables of shew bread, should be a matter entirely within the hands of those who were loyal to the king and the Hebrew people and the priesthood which must, in the eyes of the Lord, control the Temple and the sacrifices and worship therein forever.

Fanor said that instead, a stranger, and what was worse, a pagan, had come from a foreign country and was now in authority over the vast army of skilled and unskilled workmen already employed in the work of Jehovah for the Israelites. This was all strange and new to Baana and he felt exceedingly uneasy about it. Who was at fault for such a blunder? King Solomon was the wisest king who had ever ruled over the Hebrews. His wisdom was like the light of the sun extending to and reviving all things, and his fame had spread throughout the civilized world. He could not have done this thing and yet, if he knew of it, since the king's power was absolute, he could undo it at once. What could be the meaning of the astonishing statements Fanor had made to him?

Fanor then explained that there was a movement among the princes and overseers of the craft to bring about a change in the office of Master Builder, for the general good.

At this time Fanor also entrusted Baana with considerable information of importance with respect to his own position, and others in and about the Temple. He told Baana of the number of men employed in and about the construction of the Temple, and gave him the details of the seventy thousand Ish Sabbal, or burden bearers; of the eighty thousand Giblim, or carvers of wood and stone; of the king's levy of thirty thousand out of all Israel who felled and hewed the cedar and fir trees in the mountains of Lebanon under Adoniram, and that there were three thousand, three hundred Menatzchim or expert Masters of Masonry who were overseers of the other one hundred eighty thousand men and that, besides this great array, there were still above the overseers three hundred Harodim, known as princes, rulers

or provosts, and that the Harodim were taken from the Menatzchim or overseers of the work.

After this explanation had been completed, Fanor explained further to Baana that the Harodim, or princes of the Great Fraternity, were entitled to wear a jewel which could be worn by no one else and that it consisted of a miniature pair of compasses laid over an arc of a circle with the points of the compasses extended at thirty degrees and suspended between the sides of the compasses and the arc was a representation of the sun. He indicated to Baana that he must obey the instructions given him by any of the Menatzchim, or overseers, whom he would readily recognize because of a jewel which they wore around their necks, representing the angle of a square and that all orders given him by the Harodim, or princes of the work, were even more solemnly to be carried out than those given by the Menatzchim.

At this point Fanor opened the bosom of his blouse, and instead of the silver chain bearing the silver jewel or level that Baana had noticed about his neck the night before, he observed that he wore a chain of massy gold, the links made in the form of a square, and that at the end of the chain was suspended over Fanor's bosom a gold talisman, or amulet, made in the form of a pair of compasses, with the points extended at an angle of thirty degrees, overlaying an arc of a circle and supporting in the center a representation of the sun.

Baana was now convinced of what he had from the first suspected,—that Fanor was not a beadsman, but was in high authority and above and beyond that, was one of the three hundred princes and rulers over the one hundred eighty-three thousand, three hundred men employed in the work of building the Temple.

At this moment a disturbance was made from without, and there entered two men, one of whom Baana now readily recognized as the horseman at the ford of the river Jordan, known to him since his experience of last night, as Akirop.

With him was a stranger whom Baana had not seen before, but as soon as the stranger spoke, Baana remembered the voice which came from behind the veil in the secret chamber adjoining the royal quarries of the one in supreme command. He scanned the stranger closely and observed that, like Akirop and Fanor, he was tall and spare, with dark hair and eyebrows. His complexion was swarthy; his general appearance closely resembled that of the other two. He did not speak in Hebrew, but Baana, having heard the language used several times, began to suspect that it was Egyptian. Fanor and Akirop showed him the utmost respect and it was clear that he was in authority over them. Baana felt sure that he was Metusael, the person beyond the veil at the ceremonies of the neophytes in the meeting of the Great Fraternity. His voice was familiar, even in the strange tongue, and Baana thought it was the voice of the speaker whom he did not see at that time. Baana noticed around the neck and upon the bosom of each the same gold chain and amulet as that worn by Fanor. By this he knew that all three were Harodim, or Princes of the Fraternity, sometimes called Past Masters.

CHAPTER VII.

The Secret Envoys

To Baana the days now passed rapidly. Fanor, recognizing his natural ability, had placed him among the wood carvers who carved the cedar, fir and other precious woods for the ornamentation of the Temple building. Baana applied himself with diligence to these duties in working time, and to their study in other hours when he was not taking his needed rest. His skill increased rapidly and he was soon placed upon that portion of the wood carving requiring the greatest degree of skill, and provided with a number of helpers and assistants, who worked under his direction.

At Baana's earnest request, Fanor saw to it that Abdamon, the seafaring man, was assigned to the work with him. In this manner the friendship between the two became more and more intimate. Little by little they imparted to each other their lives' histories and their ambitions, hopes and fears.

In the course of time Baana was advised that the carving of the precious woods for the ornamentation of the Temple buildings would be entrusted to his general direction under the immediate supervision of his friend, Abdamon; and that he would be expected to fit himself for the part of the work in and about the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple which would require the most consummate skill and that he would be under the immediate direction of the Master Builder of the Temple, in person.

The exact character of the work was not made known to Baana at once; but it was explained to him that he would be required so to fit himself and increase his skill to such an extent that from the choicest cedar wood brought from the forest of Lebanon, he would be able to carve flowers, leaves,

pomegranates, acorns, sheaves of wheat, cherubim and other designs in bold relief so that the representation would be so near the originals from which the carvings were to be made that the one could not be told from the other.

Fired with zeal for this work, Baana applied himself now more vigorously than ever and, being keen of eye and strong of limb, he was able, by rapid and dextrous strokes of his chisel of tempered copper (a lost art) to bring out the most beautiful designs upon the cedar wood.

In the meantime Abdamon, laboring diligently under the instructions of his friend and leader, also had attained a considerable degree of skill in the work of carving capitals, friezes, entablatures and cornices; in fact, any and every thing of that character which was used for ornamentation both inside and outside of the Temple buildings and for the archways, gates, stairways, columns and pilasters.

As Baana became better acquainted with his patron, Fanor, the latter entrusted more of his personal views to Baana. It seemed that Fanor regarded Baana as a natural leader of men, gifted with that subtle and indescribable factor of inspiring confidence in those who were under his direction. From this viewpoint Fanor, it appeared, deemed Baana to be doubly valuable. His energies, skill and discrimination in wood carving in the higher and broader sense, for great structures like the Temple building, were matchless, save and except only the skill of the artisans from Tyre, with whom Baana commenced his work and studies of wood carving and from whom he acquired the foundation of his knowledge; and it apparently seemed to Fanor that Baana as a natural leader might be entrusted with his plans and designs, many of which were complex and intricate and all of which appeared to be extensive in many directions.

After a time Fanor instructed Baana to meet him privately at a certain meeting place on the Temple grounds, which had been erected by Fanor's orders and walled in with great stones, so that any conference held therein might be beyond earshot from those outside. Upon arrival there

Baana found Fanor, Akirop and, as he thought, Metusael waiting for him, and also two strangers whom Baana had never seen before. They interested Baana and he was puzzled as to their nationality and purposes. One of the strangers appeared to resemble the three Princes of the Great Fraternity with whom Baana was now becoming somewhat acquainted. He was dressed in a peculiar garb not unlike the one worn by Akirop when Baana first saw him on horseback at the ford of the river Jordan. His complexion was the same as the other three and his height and weight appeared to be about the same as theirs. He was between forty and fifty years of age, strong and stalwart. He spoke but seldom and usually in a tongue which Baana did not understand, but which he now believed to be Egyptian; occasionally he used Hebrew with the same stilted accuracy which Baana had noted in the other three. Baana studied him as carefully as he could without appearing to do so; but the stranger's robe was never open sufficiently to ascertain whether or not he wore about his neck any emblem of authority. The other stranger was still more puzzling to Baana. He was much shorter in stature than the first and his general build could not be ascertained because of his peculiar robe. It was also impossible for Baana to tell whether his face bore any resemblance to the others, as he was heavily veiled and did not speak except in a whisper and never loud enough for Baana to hear anything he said.

The three princes, or rulers, spoke to Baana alternately and conveyed to him many startling things, among others that the time had now nearly arrived when something must be done to free the workmen of the Temple and in the quarries and on the mountains of Lebanon from the rule of the stranger from Tyre, who had been wrongfully placed over them. Baana was not familiar with affairs of state and had never been close enough to the Master Builder from Tyre to hold a conversation with him or judge his temperament. There appeared to Baana so far as he associated with

his fellows, a great division among the workmen as to the propriety of this stranger from Tyre being set in supreme authority over them. Many of the workmen, particularly those in the less skilled parts of the work, murmured against it. It appeared that sedition had been sown diligently among them, and they were armed with arguments whereby they gave their reasons for their objection to the rule of the stranger. Upon the other hand the more highly skilled workmen generally seemed to favor the arrangement, giving as their reasons that King Solomon's subjects were a pastoral and agricultural people and were neither masons nor builders, and that it was necessary for the king to send to the most highly developed artisans in the world for the purpose of obtaining a man sufficiently familiar with architecture and structural work to plan and carry through to completion such an amazing structural feat as the building of the great Temple and all of the numerous columns, arches, gates and palaces in connection with it.

Those who were in favor of the plan of sending to Tyre for a great architect had themselves for the most part, come in personal contact with him and had derived inspiration from his presence; therefore, through their own improved equipment for the work in hand, had seen the expediency of procuring perhaps the best architect in the world. It was indeed common fame that the city of Tyre at that time, and for centuries before, had produced the master architects and builders of the world, and this man, who was said by those who spoke in his favor to have come from a long line of great architects, had himself, under the King of Tyre, with an army of men at his command, built a great aqueduct reaching from a long distance up the sea coast opposite the western slopes of the mountains of Lebanon down to a point upon the coast directly abreast the city of Tyre and then, by means of graceful arches, had led this immense aqueduct across an arm of the sea more than eight furlongs in width, into the heart of Tyre. The mighty aqueduct was more than three hundred and twenty furlongs in length and

the lateral branches or flumes which brought the pure fresh water from the torrents and cataracts leaping down the mountains of Lebanon into the main aqueduct were alone more than one hundred furlongs in length.

They said further that he was of ripe and mature age; being upwards of sixty at the time that he was sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, to Solomon for the purpose of supervising the construction of the Temple and its buildings and, notwithstanding this ripe age, it was said that he was in the most perfect health and vigor, keen of vision and incisive of mind.

Baana was torn between two opinions. Was the man from Tyre an arch-fiend sent by a pagan king to undermine the power of Solomon and assist at some opportune time in turning over Palestine, with its capital city, Jerusalem, and the vast wealth which had been accumulated in the treasury of David with which to build a Temple to Jehovah? This wealth, it was said by those who had knowledge of it, was as great as the combined wealth of all the kingdoms of the world. It was a tremendous goal for the King of Tyre to strike for. Was he using his great officer and chief architect as an entering wedge to get into position to capture this treasure? Upon the other hand, Baana wondered if the man from Tyre was, as said by some, a demigod, possessing powers greater than any other man in existence,—a knowledge so vast and an ability so matchless that he appeared to be endowed supernaturally. It seemed, from what was said of him by the more highly skilled workmen, that his wisdom was unfathomable. It was readily agreed that he was the greatest living architect; but what was more astonishing, he appeared to possess a knowledge minute, and in detail, of any subject which might be employed, not only in architecture and building, but also in ornamentation and decoration of the great buildings after they were completed. It seemed that he understood carving of stone and wood, that he was master of fashioning and wielding of brass and copper and of bronze and all other metals and metallic sub-

stances in use at that time. It was said that he was an expert in the weaving of gold and silver cloth, of woven stuffs of the richest texture and most attractive and beautiful designs. It was told that he could work in every kind of metal, in ornamentation, and was a lapidary of so high a degree of expertness that he could cut all manner of precious stones into such forms and shapes as to set upon the carved facets of those stones a history of a nation, or a world movement.

Baana was profoundly impressed with the two great extremes in the reputation of the Master Builder.

While still at the conference with Fanor and the others, all of these things passed through his mind. He was now being asked directly to come out and align himself against the Master Builder and in doing so to bring with him all of the workmen in his division.

Baana could not be blamed for hesitating under these conditions. It had not been many months since he was a goatherd, the son of a goatherd, in an obscure wady on the farther side of the river Jordan, near the very edge of the great Assyrian desert where he met but few people, and they generally ignorant of the ways of the world outside of their narrow walks of life. He could not, under these circumstances, master the political situation of the world, and the relationship between the great King of Israel and the King of Tyre at once; nor was he, in that short time, to learn the purposes and motives of Fanor and his associates.

Baana's objects and purposes were of the highest. He sought to do, or assist in doing, that which was right. If the best interests of the king, whom he revered next to Jehovah himself, were being menaced by the presence of this Tyrian stranger in high authority in Jerusalem, then indeed it was his duty as a loyal subject of his king to do all in his power to shake off this menace. What was the true situation? Baana pondered deeply.

He then asked Fanor if he might be excused and be given an opportunity to study over this portentous matter and ar-

rive at a decision. Upon this statement from Baana a great change appeared to come over Fanor and, to some extent, over his companions. His swarthy face became darker, his chin seemed to protrude and his nose appeared to sharpen, his dark eyes clouded and flashed fire and his face set in hard lines. He now spoke to Baana harshly and with a severity which Baana could scarcely comprehend. He said:

"Baana, it was Akirop who met thee at the ford of the Jordan and directed thee to the only gate through which thou mightest enter Jerusalem. It was I who met thee at the sheep gate and brought thee unharmed into the city, inducted thee into the Great Fraternity, without which thou wouldst not have been permitted even to see inside the Temple grounds. It was Metusael who presided over the meeting behind the veil when thou wert initiated. It was I who procured thee employment such as thou desirest and have caused thee to be advanced until now thou art the leader in thy class of work about the Temple and art set over numbers of thy companions in the same work; and dost thou at this time doubt anything which comest to thee from Metusael, Akirop or myself?"

Without giving Baana time to answer, Fanor rushed on rapidly:

"I say to thee that it would have been far better for thee never to have left thy father's hovel nor given up thy work as a goatherd than to place thy opinion against us three, for we are determined men and can drop thee down as rapidly as thou hast been built up. There are dungeons about the royal quarries known to those who are now sitting in this room in which others like thee, who have been disloyal to us, have found the end of their days without their relatives or friends ever learning what became of them."

This was indeed an unfortunate speech for Fanor. Many, perhaps the most, of mankind from the dawn of history down, are intimidated by a show of superior force and power and will fawn upon the hand which strikes them. There are exceptions, and Baana was one. There were present in

the stone chamber against him Metusael, Fanor and Akirop and the two strangers—five to one. Baana studied the chamber intently and also looked as carefully as he could over the figures of those who were now clearly his enemies unless he acceded to their wishes; this he had decided not to do. They did not appear to be armed; neither did he see arms in and about the chamber; yet in that time it was customary to bear arms of some kind and especially was that so with those in authority.

Baana, being possessed of bodily strength far beyond the average person of his day and desirous of equipping himself in every way for his battle with the world had obtained much skill in handling the two-edged shortsword from his friend, Abdamon who, from the conditions forced upon him by his occupation as a coastwise sailor around the Mediterranean, had acquired great skill with the famous weapon which prevailed largely at that time, commonly called the two-edged broadsword. Baana having ascertained that his friend was an expert with the sword, provided himself with a similar weapon and practiced constantly in the privacy of their own sleeping chamber in the royal quarries, by the aid of what little daylight filtered through the air passage, supplemented by tapers and oil lamps in use at that time.

Baana had quickly determined from the harsh and brutal attitude taken by Fanor, that the latter and his companions were in the wrong in this great controversy. He was now thoroughly convinced that they meant harm to the Temple plans and, perhaps, to the king, and empire itself; otherwise they would not have approached him with harsh language and threats. He felt also that if they were really officers of the Great Fraternity that they were self-serving hypocrites, such as can be found in the best institutions everywhere. He was greatly outnumbered, and the massive stone door which protected the entrance to the chamber which they occupied had been closed and firmly bolted on the inside by Fanor as soon as Baana entered. Moreover,

Akirop stood in front of the door, so there was no egress for Baana, and nothing to do but fight or surrender.

Baana was possessed of good native judgment and realized that throwing his life away in a battle against impossible odds neither benefited himself nor his king. Upon the other hand, here was clearly a conspiracy on foot; possibly in powerful hands, not only against the Great Fraternity, while pretending to be part of it, but against the very empire itself. It would be better, he thought, to placate Fanor and his associates; get out of their clutches and convey the information of the mighty conspiracy which had now come within his knowledge, to the proper official quarters so that the Temple, the king, the Fraternity and his country might be saved from a secret attack.

He, therefore, set about arguing with Fanor and asking for time in which to deliberate and determine his course. Fanor, however, was shrewd and astute, familiar with all such ruses and hard as malakite after long exposure to the elements. He had no intention of allowing Baana to escape and carry information to the king's officers. He stated clearly and unequivocally that Baana must upon his solemn oath made to Jehovah, and upon pain of death, swear allegiance to their cause, and that he would bring to their side all of the small army of men now under his control.

Baana, of course, was not skilled in legal reasoning. It was not clear to him, especially under the great stress of the moment, that an oath given under compulsion could not bind him either in the sight of Jehovah or before the judges of his people. He knew only that he would never adhere to such an oath and resolved then and there to sell his life as dearly as possible.

In the corner of the stone chamber where Baana had seated himself when he came into the presence of Fanor and the others was a niche or coign cut back into the corner, over the upper portion of which projected a stone coping somewhat like a roof.

This roof was of solid stone, so that by stepping into this coign Baana was protected overhead and upon every side except directly in front, by massive stone. He quickly arose and stepped back into the coign and made this declaration in a clear ringing voice to Fanor and those with him:

"Thy words and conduct show clearly that thou art determined to accomplish thy purpose by any means. No good purpose was ever accomplished by foul means, and while I have little knowledge of the things thou relatest me, I am convinced that thy purposes are evil; that thou art a traitor, not only to the king and the Great Fraternity, but to the holy Temple and to Jehovah himself. I will never unite with thee or thine in the accomplishment of an evil purpose. If I may pass from here unharmed, I will not seek thee again; nor will I follow orders from thee except they be in the line of my work. If I may not pass, do thy will with me if thou and the others with thee are able to do so. If I am to be slain now, I will accept it as the will of One greater than thou or I."

Fanor and the others gazed upon Baana in amazement. His stature appeared to have grown in a moment to that of a giant. His eyes flashed fire as of lightning; his limbs, quite strong before, appeared now to be massive and endowed with the strength of one skilled in fighting. While Fanor had little doubt that those present could prevail over Baana, yet he preferred to argue a little longer, hoping by the display of tremendous power and authority to bring Baana to his views. He said:

"Baana, thou art but a simple goatherd. All thou knowest thou hast learned from me or by my instructions. The great plan, which is now working out, has been under way for long. Thou couldst no more block it, even if thou wouldst, which shall never be, than thou couldst turn aside the downward rush of Jordan's waters. Even now, armed soldiers of Shishak, the Pharaoh, like the sands of the desert for number, are marching from the Nile eastward to the further bank of the Jordan, there to unite with other great

armies of the Assyrian king, and all, at the proper signal, will swarm over the Jordan and conquer Palestine." "They," pointing to the strangers in the chamber, "are envoys from Shishak who bring us the word that in a few days the blow will fall. Thy puny king will be put to death, and the great Temple to thy false God, Jehovah, will be made the sanctuary of Apis, our god, and the Bull will be stalled in the Holy of Holies.

"The treasure of David concealed in or about Jerusalem will be found by torturing those who know its secret hiding place and it will be used to make Pharaoh ruler of the world. Thy men will be made slaves with chains around their necks and compelled to do the work of beasts in the field for the Egyptians and Assyrians. Thy handsome women will become slaves for our generals and the others will be given to our Ethiopian blackamoors for their gratification. There is no hope for thee except with us, and with us thou must unite and fight or thou shalt come to thy death before leaving this chamber. For the last time, Baana, thou art given opportunity to decide. Which shall it be? Death and oblivion now or a great career with us, ending in the position of a general in one of our mighty armies? Choose now, Baana, and ponder well thy choice."

CHAPTER VIII.

The Combat

Baana drew himself up to his full height and retired as far as possible into the coign so that he could not be reached except directly in front. His answer rang through the chamber sharp and clear.

"My choice is made. Do thy will."

The echo of his answer had scarcely ceased when Fanor, Akirop and one of the envoys of Shishak, being the one who was not veiled, lunged toward Baana as if to grip and throttle him instantly. The envoy was nearer Baana and led the other three in the rush forward.

As he came toward Baana with his arms extended and almost close enough to grasp Baana's shoulders, a strange thing happened with such marvelous quickness that the others halted with their eyes starting from their sockets. The envoy, reclining upon a stone couch in the corner, sent out a piercing scream which Baana recognized instantly as the voice of a woman. The first envoy, with arms outstretched directly in front of Baana, and just within grasp, fell over backwards with his face horribly distorted and writhed upon the floor once or twice while a hideous sound, which resembled the cry of a mortally wounded animal in the jungle, came from a great gaping wound in his throat. In a shorter time than it takes to tell it, he was stone dead upon the floor. Metusael, Fanor and Akirop cautiously approached the writhing body unable to comprehend what had happened. The floor was covered with blood which poured forth from the aorta and jugular vein of the dead man. It shot across the floor and accumulated in a large pool. Baana stood calmly and unruffled in his coign of vantage, his robe pulled tightly about him and his left hand concealed beneath it. As usual, Fanor was the first to speak.

"Baana, by what means hast thou done this thing? No matter what they may be thy death is now certain! Thou hadst better yield thyself to a merciful death than to be torn to shreds at our hands."

Baana, realizing the danger of his position, laughed a harsh, mirthless laugh which indicated more than anything he could have said to his enemies his entire belief in his ability to protect himself. He said:

"Thou hast mocked our king, who is gentle and kind. Thou hast scorned our people and planned their destruction. Thou hast blasphemed our God. Behold now His ability to defend His children. If thou wishest the death of him who lieth on the stone floor, come forward and receive it."

The corner in which Baana had placed himself for protection was but a pace or two from the massive stone door. Baana realized at this time that if his enemies were given an opportunity to think they would unfasten the door and send one of their number outside to procure broadswords with which to fight him, or possibly, fire, by means of which he could be incinerated in the chamber. This thought having flashed through his mind, he quickly left his niche and took his position in front of the door.

Seeing this, Fanor and the others decided that he was weakening and that they could now come at him. Again they lunged forward, Fanor directly in front. Akirop and Metusael separated, and attempted to come on him from the sides. Fanor was this time in the lead and the hideous death which had come to the envoy missed him by only a trifle.

Before coming to the meeting with Fanor and the others, Baana had been engaged in sharpening one of his very largest tempered copper chisels, nearly the length but twice the width of a broadsword and, fearing to be late at the appointment, had concealed it under his robe, intending to return it to his shop after the interview with Fanor was over. Being now skilled with the broadsword and also with the handling of the great chisel, Baana was armed with a

weapon of such unique character and amazing effectiveness as completely to dismay his adversaries.

When the envoy rushed upon him, Baana having prepared himself, swung the broad point of the chisel outward and upward against the exposed throat of the envoy in such a way as to completely sever his neck, except a small portion of the spinal column, causing instant death. While the body was falling forward and down to the stone floor Baana had sufficient time to conceal the chisel under his robe again before the others could clearly see what his weapon was.

Fanor was now destined to learn the effectiveness of the chisel. When he approached within reach of Baana, the latter swiftly shot the chisel directly toward his throat in the same manner as before. Fortunately for Fanor, at that moment his foot struck some object upon the floor which caused him to stumble forward and sideways and the heavy chisel, instead of striking him directly under the chin, struck him upon the left under jawbone, completely laying open that side of his face and severing his left ear so that it hung only by the skin on the upper part. Fanor staggered backward roaring with pain. Metusael and Akirop halted in their forward rush to close with Baana, who now brandished his chisel from right to left in such a manner that it clearly indicated certain death to those who might come within its reach. The unusual but terribly effective weapon of Baana's decided the other two to remain at a safe distance. They had not their broadswords with them and there was nothing else with which to make head against Baana. The second of the envoys, now clearly known to Baana to be a woman in disguise, remained motionless and speechless upon the stone couch, evincing no desire to enter into the combat. Baana waited a short space for a further attack, but none came.

Metusael and Akirop confined themselves to the work of bandaging the hideous wound sustained by Fanor, which might take his life. Seeing his opportunity, Baana, still facing the center of the room, reached behind him, unfas-

tened the bolt of the great stone door, cautiously pulled it open and, brandishing the heavy chisel in front of him to prevent being attacked, backed out of the door and disappeared into the night.

He hurried at top speed to the chamber in the royal quarries occupied by Abdamon and himself as sleeping quarters. There he found Abdamon asleep, as he had hoped and expected. Awakening him, Baana quickly informed him of everything which had taken place. It was agreed between them at once that Baana would not be safe from assassination anywhere in or about the royal quarries. The question uppermost in the minds of both of the friends was as to what should be done next. The saving of Baana's life was not the only, or even the greatest, matter to be considered. Everything,—life, liberty, the very existence of their people, was threatened, from within the higher councils of the Great Fraternity, unknown to the king, or others in authority. What was to be done? The two friends agreed that they could not remain where they then were, as the emissaries of Fanor and his accomplices would quickly search for Baana there and, if found, put him to death. They, therefore, equipped themselves with their broadswords and passed out of the royal quarries by secret passages and unused ways.

When well outside of the quarries and hidden among the rocks and clefts of the elevated ridge upon which the city of Jerusalem is built, they debated between themselves for some time as to what course to pursue. They finally decided to make their way, if possible, to the quarters occupied by the Master Builder and lay all the facts before him. They then disguised themselves as much as possible with what means they had and, it being in the middle of the night, they hoped to get through without being recognized. They were outside the great walls of the city and feared that guards had been placed at all of the gates of the city for the purpose of intercepting them if they should attempt to pass either

way. There was, therefore, but one entrance open to them and even that was fraught with grave danger.

They returned to the royal quarries by a secret passage which had been hewn by Baana and Abdamon through the solid wall of the quarries and concealed on the inside by a heap of stone and on the outside by a clump of shrubbery in the face of the great bluff or wall, extending from the upper to the lower benches, described in a previous chapter. They had cut this passage through as a precautionary measure, believing that at some time it might be needed and they had carefully guarded its secret and kept its knowledge only to themselves. Passing through this secret opening, they hurried to the quarry entrance of the secret passage from the royal quarries to the inside of the Damascus gate, through which Baana had been brought by Fanor upon his first induction into the Great Fraternity. Going through this passage, they proceeded with bare feet and extreme caution, expecting to meet emissaries of Fanor and his colleagues at any point. They reached the inner side of the city's great wall, however, without difficulty and, from there hastened to the Temple district for the purpose of applying for admission at the Master Builder's quarters. Upon arrival there, they sought admission. In time they succeeded in attracting the attention of a personal attendant of the great architect to whom they explained the necessity of seeing him at once. This attendant bade them follow, and led the way to a spacious chamber which appeared to be a reception room. The attendant bade them await there and disappeared behind heavy curtains of fine cloth of exceedingly beautiful design. Baana and Abdamon seated themselves on couches so rich and magnificent that Baana was filled with amazement because of their beauty and comfort. Silently they waited the coming of the greatest builder of all time.

CHAPTER IX.

The Master Builder

Solomon, King of Israel, ascended the throne of David in the year 1008 B. C., 476 years after the Children of Israel had been delivered out of their bondage in Egypt. His father, David, included in his personality the culmination of the greatest current of religious thought ever poured out upon the human race. Great races of people, such as the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, Babylonians and others have stamped their imprint upon the human mind. The world is indebted to Greece for literature and art; to Rome for law and political and military discipline; to Tyre and the Phoenicians for architecture and the manufacture of textile fabrics; but to the Israelites, or Hebrews, the human race owes the greatest of all debts. Prior to the rise of the Israelitish races, the spiritual world was peopled, in the minds of those who embraced any religion whatsoever, with innumerable gods, deities and rulers. The Greeks had their gods of war, of peace, of the hunt, of the harvest, of the waters, of the home, and innumerable other gods; and after all these imaginary deities were set up in their minds, fearing that they might overlook some fanciful ruler of the spiritual world, they had another god whom they called "the unknown god." Such was the theory of religion of the Greeks and Romans and, prior to the rise of the religion of the Hebrews, all the peoples of the earth, whether barbarous or civilized, worshipped numerous gods of supposedly different functions, controlling their everyday lives. The more civilized the people the more numerous were their gods, until it came to be thought that the civilization or enlightenment of a race was measured by the number of its gods.

But the Hebrews gave to the world the great religious theory of monotheism, or one God. To the Israelites, and to them alone, is the human race indebted for the elimination from the human mind of a jungle of gods and a morass of fragmentary religions. If the Israelites did nothing else than clear the human mind of the rabble of nonsensical gods and rulers of petty things, they will, for that alone, live forever. The theory of monotheism was blazoned forth as a great light shining across the world in the first words of the biblical narrative, and developed more and more clearly to its end, and David, the fighting King of Israel, was obsessed by this great thought to a marvellous degree. Throughout the period of his reign the country over which he ruled as king was in continual turmoil because of wars both external and internal. The larger portion of the energy and fidelity of this great king, during his reign, was absorbed in maintaining tranquility within his empire and repelling invaders from beyond its frontiers.

Notwithstanding the tremendous task resting upon him, sufficient to tax to their utmost the powers of the strongest ruler who has ever lived, yet in his entire reign his mind dwelt upon the fulfillment of the vow of Abraham, made half a thousand years before,—the erection of a Temple of wondrous magnificence to the ONE GOD of the Hebrews. All of the power and strength of David, outside of the direct command of the military forces of his kingdom in preserving it intact from innumerable foes, were employed in bringing together from sources known and unknown at this time jade and onyx, cloth of gold and silver, fabrics, hammered brass, cedar, and perfumed woods in preparation for the erection of the Temple and its co-ordinate buildings, gateways, stairways, arches, bridges, towers, columns and walls. The value of the treasure and the cost of the labor of one hundred eighty-three thousand and six hundred men employed thereon for more than twenty-one years would aggregate a sum greater than the combined wealth of all the nations and peoples of the world today.

Consider then the task placed before Solomon, the son of David, at the time when he ascended the throne. The gold and silver, the precious stones and wondrous fabrics had been gathered together by David, his father, and it was expected of him that he would emulate and, if possible, exceed the great plans of David in building the House of the Lord.

The first question which Solomon must contend with was the selection of the chief architect who should have under his control the distribution of this vast army of men, all the way from the quarries beneath the earth and from the brass foundries along the western shores of the Jordan to the hewers of the cedar trees and the fir trees in the mountains of Lebanon.

This great architect must also be capable of drawing the plans of the Temple and of the many structures collected about it.

At this period of development among the Israelites they were a pastoral people, rearing and guarding their flocks upon the many hills of the land of Canaan. They were not builders except in the rudest sense. They were not architects in any sense. The arch and, more particularly, the pointed arch up to this time had never been used in all of Palestine and yet the great Temple and its auxiliary structures, walls, towers, bridges and vestibules, must be composed of innumerable arches, both curved and pointed. Columns and pilasters with beautiful ornate capitals, friezes, cornices and entablatures must be employed in bewildering profusion. Solomon, with all of his wisdom and with the treasure left him by David, his father, must yet search the world to find a man of the transcendent ability to command the vast army of workmen; to arrange and order the work on the mountains and in the quarries, upon the looms and at the foundries; to cause this great structure to assemble and grow up as if by magic, silently and without confusion.

The spirit of Jehovah had descended and communicated through the High Priest to David and to Solomon that it was the wish of the God worshipped by the Hebrews that neither the sound of axe, hammer nor any tool of iron, should be heard in the Temple as the "great stones, costly stones and hewed stones" from the far distant quarries were assembled and grew up to the heavens, developing the wondrous structure. The will of the Almighty, spoken through the beard of the High Priest, was that the Temple should grow up wondrously and mysteriously without noise or confusion, without the blow of hammer or metallic maul, as if built by spiritual hands from the realms above.

Every stone in the Temple and all of the walls surrounding the structures, bridges and arches supporting it, whatever size, shape or curvature, were to be planned out down to the twentieth part of a hair by the mind of the Great Builder; the stones, timber, cedar and fir must be cut to size in the quarries and upon the mountains and in the distant places, and the castings of brass in such great quantities that the Book of Numbers says the weight thereof was never found out, were all to be made to patterns of scrupulous exactness in the clay grounds along the river Jordan, so that when all of the stones, the cedar and the fir and wood of myrtle, the castings of brass and the hammered copper were brought to the summit of Mount Moriah, not so much as one blow should ever be struck upon them again, but each, under the plans of this almost supernatural mind, must fit together with such precision that, the Book of Kings tells us, when it was finished it appeared not to be the work of human hands, but the design and craftsmanship of the Almighty Himself.

Where, then, was Solomon to find so educated, so learned, so skilled a man, with a mind so majestic that it could accomplish this monumental undertaking? Solomon, wisest of all kings, knew that not in all of his realm was there a man capable of so much as starting upon this superhuman task and so we are told in Holy Writ: "And it came to pass

that Hiram, King of Tyre, sent his servants unto Solomon, for he had heard that Solomon had been anointed king in the room of his father, and Hiram was ever a lover of David."

How eagerly in the next verse we are told that "Solomon sent unto Hiram saying, 'And thou knowest how that David, my father, purposed to build a house unto the Lord' ", and we are told further on in the same chapter that Solomon besought Hiram to send him a man skilled in architecture to direct the building of the House, "For thou knowest that in all Israel there is none that can skill to hew like unto the Sidonians."

It was indeed wise of Solomon to send to the King of Tyre for his chief architect, because Tyre, that matchless city which ruled the commercial and maritime world for a thousand years, was built, maintained and kept up by great architects, as we shall see in another chapter of this story.

The ancient city of Tyre, lying northwest of Jerusalem opposite the coast of that long, narrow country known as Phoenicia, of which Tyre was at that time the capital, had been built upon an island of solid stone eight furlongs out from the seacoast in the Mediterranean, or what was locally known as the Great Sea. This island was almost circular, twenty-four furlongs in circumference. For their protection against lawless tribes on land and still more lawless pirates upon the sea, the Phoenicians, about a half a thousand years prior to this time, had moved their capitol from the ancient city known as Great Sidon on the mainland to this island out at sea. They had built a mighty wall around the outer edge of the island, of massive stone forty cubits thick and sixty cubits high; this wall being a continuation upward from the cliff-like shore of the island so that it was practically impregnable from attacks by pirates, or others who might approach it by water, and there was no means of reaching it by land. The kings of Tyre at the time the occupation of this island began, caused a canal to be cut through the centre of the island and the mighty wall to be arched over the canal at each end so that galleons, argosies and shipping

of all kinds, when the great gates at the canal entrances were opened, might pass through and discharge their cargoes of raw material in the city of Tyre and there load other cargoes of finished products which were carried out over the Mediterranean Sea to all parts of the commercial and maritime world. Its kings for the most part were powerful and wise rulers. Its inhabitants were artisans highly skilled in building, designing, working in the precious metals and precious stones, weaving beautiful textile fabrics, painting, staining, tempering to such a wonderful degree of perfection that the modern world is not capable of approaching their marvelous works.

So great was the success and fame of Tyre that the entire world paid tribute to the city and, in a commercial sense, Tyre and its line of kings ruled the world for a thousand years before the rise of the Roman Empire.

He who reflects will grasp at once that a great walled city built upon a stone island eight furlongs from the mainland out in the sea would be entirely without water for the use of its people, and that this most necessary of all elements must be brought to the city in some manner in a constant and undiminishing supply.

Sixty years before the first stone in the foundation of King Solomon's Temple was laid upon the summit of Mount Moriah there was born in the city of Tyre one Aynon, referred to in Holy Writ as Hurom, and in Masonic works as Hiram Abif. His parents and grandparents had been builders and architects of great ability. His mind was orderly, methodical and constructive; his will determined and powerful; his disposition broad and kind, but not the less firm upon those things of which his conviction was secure. In early life he showed marked ability which was noticed by those in authority, and his advancement was rapid until the time came when he was able to reach the ear of that great king, Hiram of Tyre, who was the friend of David. Aynon, in audience before the king, represented that which to the king was well known,—that great numbers of boatmen had to be

employed daily in bringing water in skin bottles from the mainland to the city and that the situation as to water was not the best, especially in case of siege, as no reserve could be accumulated under the system of transportation in the skin bottles. He suggested to the king that if sufficient men were detailed under his command and supplies and material furnished he would bring an inexhaustible supply of fresh water into the city of Tyre and dispense with the hundreds, perhaps thousands, of boatmen who were constantly engaged in bringing water from the mainland to Tyre.

So thorough, comprehensive and magnificent was his plan that the king seized upon it at once and ordered that all things required by Aynon should be furnished immediately, and that there should be no delay in beginning the work.

With great numbers of skilled Masons in his command, Aynon went north along the sea coast three hundred and twenty furlongs from Tyre, opposite the long chain known as the mountains of Lebanon and, going up into the various chasms and defiles of these mountains, he caused conduits to be built out of that choice and almost indestructible material known as gneiss granite to carry the brilliant, sparkling streams of mountain water out to the foothills thence along the coast where they emptied their silvery streams into a larger aqueduct built by him on beautiful columns for the entire stretch of three hundred and twenty furlongs down the coast to a point opposite the city of Tyre. Then, by means of graceful arches, that at a distance seemed slender as a spider's web, this great stone aqueduct was carried across the sea eight furlongs from the main land, to the city of Tyre, pouring into the city a crystal river of cold mountain water.

The ruins of the great city of Tyre, destroyed in after years by Alexander the Great, still mark its location upon the island off the seacoast of Phoenicia, and portions of the great aqueduct and its branches, built of that excellent

material, gneiss granite, still endure, and upon every stone today will be found the mark of the fellow-craft who hewed and shaped the stone at the quarries.

Upon the urgent request of Solomon, King of Israel, to the friend of his father that he furnish a man well skilled in the arts and sciences, capable of carrying on this mighty work to a successful completion, it was clear that there was but one man in the world who could be sent at Solomon's bidding. This man was Aynon, the builder of the aqueduct, who had then been elevated to the exalted position of Hiram Abif, which means "The king's father." "Hiram" (exalted) in that day and age of the world, meant "ruler" or "king." "Abif" is composed of two Hebrew words or, rather, a Hebrew word and a terminal or suffix. "Ab" in Hebrew means "father" and "If" or "Iv" denotes the possessive case, therefore "Abif" means "his father" and the combination "Hiram Abif" means "the king's father," and is not a name at all as has been supposed by many. This, of course, did not signify father by blood nor did it mean parent, but was a term used at that time indicating the most exalted office in the empire under the king himself, comparable to grand vizier in the Holy Land at the present time, and in Occidental civilization equivalent to vice-president, premier or any office indicating that the person so designated held all the power of the realm, under the supreme executive head.

So it fell out that the greatest builder of all time, at the age of sixty years, was sent by the greatest commercial and maritime king of the world, Hiram of Tyre to the king of the greatest of all religious peoples to build for that king a Temple to his God, which should surpass any structure or combination of structures ever before erected and that it, as King Solomon hoped, would endure forever.

* * * * * *

Presently the Master Builder entered the chamber where Baana and Abdamon waited. There were two attendants with him who might have been guards. He was indeed a

majestic personage, about sixty years of age, average height, with figure full and robust; massive head covered with a great shock of gray hair, piercing eyes that seemed easily to read the minds of those before him.

His deportment, although that of one in authority, was kind and gentle, and such as to invite confidence. He bade Baana and Abdamon relate their business and listened patiently without comment and, apparently, without surprise to their narrative. He displayed no nervousness nor astonishment at the relation of the conspiracy against him, nor about the statement of the armies assembling upon the east bank of the Jordan for the purpose of overrunning Palestine and capturing the great treasure of David assembled for the construction of the Temple and its many buildings.

When Baana had finished, the Master Builder thanked him simply for his great bravery and loyalty. He bade Baana and Abdamon remain where they were and said he would join them presently for the purpose of laying the whole matter before the king while there yet was time to prepare for the invasion.

CHAPTER X.

The Mysterious Beauty

Presently the Master Builder returned to Baana and Abdamon, having donned a long black cloak with a high collar which came up around his ears, and a cowl or hood which came down to the collar of the cloak and effectually concealed his identity.

He signaled to the two young men to follow him and, leaving his place of abode, threaded his way through the various temple buildings until he came to the palace of the king. After passing through many vestibules and corridors, all of which were securely guarded by men-at-arms, they were admitted to the chambers of Achisar, the personal protector of King Solomon and ruler over his household.

Here the Master Builder made his business known; but Achisar told him that the king was not in his palace, but was either at the House of the Forest of Lebanon or at the palace of the queen; that a special guard had been detailed for him and he had left his palace some little time before, accompanied by this guard.

The Master Builder, having explained in some degree the great importance of his mission to Achisar in low breath, the latter at once summoned a detachment of men-at-arms and all proceeded with despatch to the palace of the queen, deeming it more likely that the king would be found there than at the House of the Forest of Lebanon.

They quickly passed through the various archways, vestibules and secret passages until they reached the queen's palace. Many difficulties here beset them. The official wife, or queen, of King Solomon was a pagan, born in Egypt and educated at Memphis and Thebes, who had absorbed with

her mother's milk the religion of that country, the worship of Apis, the Bull.

She was an idolatress from her birth and had the religion of Egypt interwoven into the very fibre of her mind. The marriage between King Solomon and this princess of Egypt had been for political purposes, as was customary between monarchs at that time. It had been supposed that the two kingdoms would be united more closely by this marriage of pure expediency. As the dowry of this great queen, King Solomon settled upon her at the time of their marriage the city of Gezeh in Palestine. When the princess came from Egypt to Jerusalem to become the queen of King Solomon, she brought with her a long train of pagan priests and church officers from her own land and in the palace set apart for her she maintained the worship of Isis, Horus and the Bull, as it was practiced in her Egyptian home.

It is readily apparent that her palace would be manned by Egyptian guards and, therefore, everything in and about the palace and the home of the queen would be a foreign and unassimilated element in Palestine and its capital city, Jerusalem, and would be entirely adverse in every respect to the worship of Jehovah.

The Master Builder, therefore, had much difficulty in making headway through the palace at that time of night, and but for the great power of Achisar who was well known to the Egyptians, it could not have been accomplished.

Finally, however, under the guidance of Achisar, who accompanied the Master Builder, Baana and Abdamon, an entrance was made into the inner parts of the palace. The detachment of armed men who accompanied Achisar were perforce left by him in the outer chamber of the palace, as the Egyptian guards would not permit them to pass.

After making his way through the outer lines of guards, Achisar was accompanied by the governor of the queen's palace himself, a swarthy Egyptian of gigantic stature. The throne-room of the queen was at last entered; but none was

present except the night attendants. At this time a messenger came from a distant part of the palace bearing advices to the Egyptian governor who, upon receipt of the message, communicated with Achisar and led the little party into a side chamber off of the queen's throne-room, which was very spacious and magnificent and was lighted with long wax candles in silver candelabra; both the candles and the candlesticks indicating clearly that they had been imported from Egypt.

There was no one present in this chamber when the Egyptian governor and the others entered it. They seated themselves and waited. Shortly King Solomon appeared, accompanied by a few palace attendants, both men and women. Achisar hurried forward and greeted the king at a point some distance beyond earshot of the Egyptian governor and the others. After a few moments' low conversation, Achisar signaled to the Master Builder to approach. King Solomon demanded of him the information of which Achisar indicated he was possessed. Rapidly he sketched the narrative of Baana of the revelations made by Fanor and his accomplices. The king ordered all of his attendants to retire and, seating himself upon a divan with the Master Builder at his right and Achisar at his left, he instructed that Baana be brought before him. The Master Builder signaled to Baana who, leaving Abdamon with the Egyptian palace governor, came forward and kneeled before the king. The king bade him arise and be seated on an ottoman in front of him and relate in detail his experience with Fanor and the others in his struggle for life. Baana went over the whole situation in much detail. Having at the time made mental note of the statements of Fanor in regard to the massing of the Egyptian and the Assyrian armies on the further bank of the Jordan, he related this information to the king in full.

The king held a hurried consultation with the Master Builder whom he addressed as Abi (meaning friend or counsellor), and also with Achisar. Instructions were issued

to the generals and captains of the king's forces to prepare for the defense and to mass their strength on the west bank of the Jordan to prevent, if possible, the crossing of the Egyptians and Assyrians. Two messengers were ordered to be sent on swift dromedaries by land to the city of Tyre with an appeal to Hiram, the King of Phoenicia for assistance in repelling the threatened invasion. Hiram of Tyre, had always been a close friend and ally of David, the father of Solomon, and was a friend of Solomon, the son of his friend. He could be relied upon to send armies of fighting men with despatch to the assistance of the King of Palestine. It was universal fame at that time that the fighting men of Tyre and, particularly, the fighting seamen, or sailors, of which Tyre had a great number, were the best armed and most thoroughly trained of any fighting force in the world.

Numerous orders were issued. The secret passage to and from the royal quarries was ordered sealed up with masonry, in order to prevent the flight of Metusael, Fanor, Akirop and of the secret envoy who was with them at the time of the combat between them and Baana. Word was also sent in all directions for the immediate arrest of these men and of the strange envoy who was with them, and upon their arrest that they should be brought before the king.

The king then directed that Achisar should remain with him; but that Abi should depart immediately to see to it that all of the king's instructions were carried out and that Baana should accompany him and be of what assistance he could.

The Master Builder, accompanied by Baana, left at once and joined the Egyptian governor of the king's palace, began to make his way out of the building, having first indicated to Abdamon to remain with Achisar. It seemed to Baana that the Egyptian governor did not lead them out by the way they came in. He desired to communicate this thought to the Master Builder, but it seemed inopportune to do so in the hearing of the Egyptian and there was no

time when they were far enough away from the Egyptian to hold a conversation, however short. They wound on through arched colonnades, vestibules and high vaulted corridors. The suspicions of Baana became more and more confirmed that the Egyptian was leading the Master Builder and himself into an ambush. Baana still had suspended by a hook from his leathern belt and concealed underneath his robe the great chisel made of highly tempered copper, and having acquired much skill in its use he felt that with this weapon he could hold at bay any number of men, and that the Master Builder must be permitted to escape from the palace at all hazards, in order that the kingdom and the sacred Temple and its mighty treasures be saved.

Suddenly it occurred to Baana that the Egyptian might not be familiar with the Assyrian tongue and that Hiram Abif, whose reputed knowledge extended to all things, might understand it. Banna, who had never spoken in the presence of the Egyptian, now addressed him in Assyrian. To this the Egyptian made no answer. Baana touched him upon the arm to draw his attention and again addressed him in Assyrian, to which the Egyptian shook his head. Baana now addressed Hiram Abif in Assyrian, asking simply if he understood that language. To this he replied immediately in the same tongue. Baana then stated to the Master Builder his suspicions that they were being led into an ambush. Hiram Abif returned in answer that he had been sure for some time that a trap had been laid for them by the Egyptian, and that he had been debating in his mind how they could escape it. Baana then informed him that he himself was armed with a weapon which in his hands was more dangerous than a broadsword and that with it, in a place where he had protection for his back, he could defend himself and the Master Builder against any number who might come against them. He suggested further that it was necessary for Hiram Abif to escape at once and despatch the orders of the king for the massing of the men of war to protect the realm and especially to send the messengers by drom-

edaries to Hiram, King of Tyre. The Master Builder deplored the necessity of leaving Baana, but agreed with him that the kingdom, the Temple and the treasure of David came before any man's life, and that he would make his way out as soon as the Egyptian's plan developed, while Baana held the ambush at bay and that he would return with all possible despatch, accompanied by armed men, to rescue Baana, if possible.

Their understanding being complete, they followed the rapid pace of the Egyptian, watching for his plans to develop. In a few paces more, the Egyptian moved swiftly to one side and concealed himself behind a great marble column. At the same moment a half dozen men armed with broadswords leaped from behind other columns and bore down upon Hiram Abif and Baana. Baana called quickly to the Master Builder to flee, which he did and was lost to sight in the darkness of the great chamber among its columns and other obstructions. Baana, having observed a double pilaster of granite buttressing a great wall to his right, leaped into the niche made between the pilasters and brought out his copper chisel just in time to impale the first of the armed men bearing down upon him, as he had done the secret envoy in the chamber of Fanor. The man's throat was slashed from side to side by the sharp edge of the great chisel before any of Baana's assailants could realize what had been done, and he sank to the stone floor while great streams of blood shot forth and reddened the granite blocks upon which he lay. The others halted an instant and hastily spoke with each other in Egyptian, which Baana could not understand, then rushed forward in pairs, there being five men in all, one bringing up the rear.

One swinging stroke of the great chisel of Baana, throat high, from side to side by his powerful and highly trained arms caused two more to fall to the stone floor of the palace, their heads all but severed from their bodies.

The three remaining men-at-arms were now clearly discomfited. They could not comprehend the character of

weapon which Baana was fighting with, nor the manner of man before them. To rush forward against him appeared to be certain death. As before stated, Baana was not familiar with the Egyptian tongue; but he had already become skilled in his knowledge of the ways of evil-doers. He surmised that the three men now whispering to each other a short distance in front of him were determining to send for a greater force that they might, in some manner, surround him or, if that were impossible because of his protection in the niche between the double pilaster, to attack him with fire or in some other way rout him from his position and compass his death. Having quickly reached this decision, Baana wisely determined that his greatest safety lay in a rapid offensive before additional help could be had. He surmised also that the Egyptian palace governor had doubtless witnessed the slaying of three of his men-at-arms and was already on the way to procure assistance. Baana concentrated all of his energy in one mighty spring while the three Egyptians within a few feet in front of him were holding their hurried consultation. He succeeded in striking one with his great copper chisel in the side of the head, splitting it open. At the sight of this, the courage of the remaining Egyptians ended completely and they fled, screaming, as they ran down the colonnade for help against a demon in the palace, slaying Egyptians by the score.

Baana could not understand their shouted words; but he readily surmised their nature and, smiling grimly, disappeared in the darkness behind the wall supported by the pilasters.

He hurried rapidly, not knowing which direction to pursue; but he had carefully concealed his great chisel beneath his robe hooked into his leathern belt, expecting to require its powerful assistance at any moment.

As he hurried through the palace, looking this way and that for egress, there suddenly opened before him an archway beautifully lighted, leading into a gorgeous chamber. The archway had been closed by heavy curtains of costly

material. These had been pulled aside by unseen hands from within just as Baana approached. Having no knowledge of the palace, and the method of exit therefrom, Baana determined to go into this lighted chamber in the hope that through it he might find the way out. No sooner was he inside the chamber than the heavy curtains fell back into their position behind him. He noticed that there were two female attendants at the doorway, one on each side, who had pulled open the curtains and let them close again. Baana had never been familiar with wealth or with rich draperies, rugs and priceless articles such as are used for the adornment of living rooms of homes of persons of great wealth. The beauty of the vaulted chamber in which he now found himself exceeded anything of which he ever had dreamed. His imagination had never pictured anything comprising a measure of the beauty of the appointments of this room. But that was not all. Baana's attention was immediately attracted to a woman reclining upon a magnificent throne-shaped chair in the center of the room. Female attendants upon each side of her were waving fans made of beautiful stained ostrich and peacock feathers so gorgeous that Baana did not comprehend what they were, until later. The woman, reclining upon the great throne was, as Baana thought, the most beautiful creature in existence. Her face, shoulders, arms and bust were all exposed and were of a dazzling whiteness. Her lips were a red flame. Her hair, eyebrows and eyelashes were of the black glint of the raven's wing. Her teeth, as she smiled invitingly towards him, were of pure white. Baana instantly decided that she was not a Hebrew, but that she had come from some foreign land whose people were unknown to him, and yet there was something familiar about her appearance. He said to himself that he had never seen such a creature before in all his life nor did he dream that one of such great beauty existed, and again he said to himself that he had seen her before. But where? He had never seen many women of any kind and had seen none who had been apparently possessed of great wealth or of any

means above the poorest, and where he could have seen this beautiful creature before was beyond his knowledge; but he had seen her; he was sure of it.

The woman addressed him in Hebrew, with faultless diction and a musical cadence in the tones of her voice which seemed to him could come from none but a superior being. She said:

"Be not afraid, stranger, but come forward and tell me thy needs as thou appearest to be in great distress."

Baana hesitated for a moment, and then divining that a creature of such beauty and attractiveness could mean nothing but good, he readily stated to her what had happened. He noticed a shadow fall across her beautiful face, but for an instant only, when he explained to her that he had slain four of his assailants in the palace and that the remaining two of the attacking party had fled, screaming, in a tongue unfamiliar to him. She then inquired from him how he had come into the palace and for what purpose. With the ignorance of innocence Baana readily related the important business which brought him and the Master Builder with Achisar to the palace. The beautiful lady then became animated. She inquired with a minuteness which created uneasiness in Baana's mind as to the nature of the instructions issued by the king for the protection of the realm, while at the same time protesting to Baana that she wished to assist him by every means in her power to escape from the palace that he might rejoin the Master Builder and see that the king's orders were carried out.

Baana, with some hesitation, repeated the commands of the king and noticed that the mysterious beauty dwelt especially upon the king's directions that two messengers mounted on fleet dromedaries be despatched within the hour to the great monarch of the Phoenician nation for assistance. She inquired with much detail as to this particular matter and as to who the messengers were that the king had designated and through which gate they would leave the city of Jerusalem. (At that time special messengers to

or from the city must have passes from a proper officer before the keepers of the gates would allow them to pass and these passes were good only through the gate indicated upon them.)

Having obtained this information from Baana, the beautiful lady ordered wine to be brought, which she served him and herself and nodded to him to drink. Baana, with a feeling of uneasiness barely touched the glass to his lips, but did not swallow so much as a drop of the wine. While pretending to drink he deftly spilled the wine inside of his gaberdine at a moment when the lady's eyes were directed toward a serving-woman whom she was addressing. O, wise son of a goatherd! How few, in thy shoes, would have displayed thy wisdom! The beautiful lady was King Solomon's official queen, but bitter enemy. She was the fifth person present in the stone chamber when Baana slew the envoy. She was the sister of Metusael, Fanor and Akirop, and the glass of wine contained the liquid venom of the Egyptian asp.

After bidding him to return to her again upon the following night and receiving his promise to do so, she excused him and sent a female attendant to show him out of the palace.

Baana succeeded, with the assistance of the guide, in reaching the open air; realizing that the wiles of the woman were fraught with more certain death to him than the broadswords of a dozen Egyptian men-at-arms; for the Master Builder, to whom he made his way immediately, quickly extracted a few drops of the wine from his garments and in a slender glass tube over a blue flame distilled the poison. Baana now experienced a feeling of weariness, and Hiram Abif, having departed to carry out the king's orders, sat upon a stone bench at the entrance to the house of the Master Builder for the purpose of resting and reflecting as to what he should do next. The many exertions and trials he had gone through had tired him exceedingly and he fell asleep upon the bench. From his sleep he was awakened by Abda-

mon who, after leaving the palace with Achizar, had returned to the house of Hiram Abif and found Baana asleep on the bench at the doorway. As soon as Baana was thoroughly aroused, the two friends related their experience to each other, and Abdamon, who was far more skilled in the evil ways of the world than Baana, surmised that the mysterious beauty, who had entertained Baana and extracted from him the information of what King Solomon had ordered done, was in sympathy with the Egyptian palace governor and, doubtless, would have the messengers to Tyre intercepted and slain.

Having reached this conclusion, Baana and Abdamon moved with great despatch until they reached the secret entrance to the royal quarries near the Damascus gate. Through this they sped, constantly watching for Fanor and the others who had attempted to assassinate Baana, until they reached that part of the quarries where Baana and Abdamon had made their sleeping quarters. The air passage through the wall of the quarries which had been enlarged by the two friendly workers now afforded them egress to the outside world. Once through and upon the great ridge or bench north of Jerusalem, they sought out the Damascus road which leads northward through the Damascus gate to the city, that being the gate through which the mounted messengers must pass. They did not follow the road, however, but kept upon the ridge above it and made their way quietly and rapidly through the starlit night to a point far north on the Damascus highway.

It was as Abdamon thought, for they soon came quietly upon a small group of men concealed behind some rocks at the side of the Damascus road, evidently lying in wait for some one, possibly the messengers to Tyre.

Baana and Abdamon also concealed themselves behind rocks to watch the movements of these men. There appeared to be five of them and they were armed with crossbows, favorite weapons of the Egyptians at that time, as Abdamon whispered to Baana. The friends agreed that they

could not cope with these men and that unless some opportunity offered to overpower them, they would simply watch their movements until morning and counteract, if possible, whatever harm they sought to do.

The morning star had just begun to creep upward in the sky when the steady hoof-beats of swift dromedaries were heard upon the Damascus road, coming from Jerusalem. Baana and Abdamon noticed the dark figures of the men in ambush moving closer to the road and, in a short time, two dim objects came into view.

Baana and Abdamon were much farther on the road away from Jerusalem than the men lying in ambush, but they could tell distinctly that the two messengers were moving with great speed northward. The assassins, lying in wait, moved closer to the road as the figures of the mounted messengers came more clearly into view. Baana and Abdamon decided hurriedly that they could not save the lives of the messengers; but they would themselves, if possible, take their places and carry word to Tyre which would bring help to King Solomon.

They moved with caution at first, and afterwards with rapidity, ever northward parallel with the road, coming closer to it until they were at the very edge of the road itself. At this time, looking southward toward Jerusalem, they saw the dark objects which they knew to be the dromedaries bearing the messengers swerve westward, and then they heard distinctly a sharp clanging of five cross-bows fired almost simultaneously. A scream came from the throats of the messengers and they fell dead from the backs of the dromedaries. The two dromedaries, being of the very best and speediest in the stables of King Solomon, came charging northward on the road, riderless and undirected. Abdamon, who had been a wanderer his life long, understood the ships of the desert as well as the ships of the sea. As the dromedaries approached, he commenced making that peculiar gurgling and clucking sound which must be heard to be understood, as it cannot be written in the characters of any

existing language, used by camel drivers to cause moving camels to halt and those which are standing to kneel so their riders may mount them. He kept this up as the dromedaries approached and they began to slacken their speed, and when they were at the point where Baana and Abdamon had stopped in the Damascus highway, the dromedaries came to a halt and immediately kneeled. Baana and Abdamon mounted them quickly, urged them to their feet and shot onward into the night with a speed greater than that of the finest Arabian race-horse.

CHAPTER XI.

The Messengers to Tyre

The dromedaries upon which Baana and Abdamon were now mounted were of the very finest from the stables of the king. They were two of the large number of swift animals maintained especially for the despatch of the king's business by envoys and messengers. They were fed, curried and kept up to the highest state of physical perfection by the attendants of the royal stables. The distance from Jerusalem to Tyre by sea was nine hundred and sixty furlongs, but by land was only seven hundred and twenty furlongs. The powerful dromedaries could readily make eight hundred furlongs at top speed without food or water. Baana was familiar with the Damascus road and with all roads leading northward from Jerusalem to the mountains of Lebanon, because he had been advanced to chief of the carvers of wood and upon him fell the duty of selecting the choicest of the cedar trees in the mountains of Lebanon and shaping them for the Holy of Holies. With his own hands he had carved the knops and open flowers which decorated the sacred altar located in the Most Holy Place and which was never beheld by human eyes after its dedication, save by the High Priest and by him only once in each sacred year of the Jewish calendar.

Baana had become so expert in the selection of the choice cedar wood that he was provided with a number of bands of fellow-crafts with eighty men in each to inspect and mark the cedar trees for his final selection.

In this work he had been in sight of the city of Tyre many times; but had never crossed the arm of the sea, eight furlongs in width, to the city upon its great stone island.

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He knew that, by land, the road from Jerusalem to Tyre deflected toward the seacoast and after passing out of the territory of King Solomon and having reached the realm of the King of Tyre they would come to a place where the mountains of Lebanon jutted out and almost overhung the Great Sea. At that particular point, if the tide was in, no passage was possible, because it washed well up on the perpendicular wall. If the tide was out the passage around this mighty headland was even then extremely difficult, because of the fact that a curious corrugated formation of rock extended from the base of the great bluff at a sharp incline down into the sea, which was bared at low tide. This formation consisted of slanting hexagonal columns of stone fitting closely together, similar to cells in honeycomb, except that the slanting columns were of great size and the corners of the hexagons on the upper sides made a sort of washboard or stairway tipped sideways, very difficult to traverse. This particular ribbed incline was commonly called the "Stairway of Tyre." The only other way to reach Tyre by land bore directly north into the mountains of Lebanon a great distance, then deflected westerly to Tyre; but this road was very long and, besides, an immense mountain must be scaled and the slope on the other side must be traveled downward to the lower levels before turning in the direction of Tyre.

At the tremendous speed being maintained by the two dromedaries side by side on the Damascus road, conversation was difficult. However Baana communicated the situation as he saw it, to Abdamon. The latter was a sailor instead of a landsman and, besides, was skilled in the strategy of war times. He said at once to Baana that they must not take the hill road. If it had been discovered by the enemies of the king in Jerusalem that they, Baana and Abdamon, had captured the dromedaries after the king's messengers had been shot to death by the crossbowmen, it would be decided at once that they would take the road over the mountains as it appeared to be the only feasible way to reach Tyre by dromedary. He said further that, undoubtedly, the

Egyptian and Assyrian generals had spies throughout the land and might be in communication with their outposts on the mountains of Lebanon by that silent and subtle means of passing intelligence, the heliograph. Baana saw, at once, the danger in taking that highway.

Abdamon said:

"If the tide is turning from flood to ebb when we reach the 'Stairway of Tyre,' I think we can pass the great headland better than if the tide is out."

Baana inquired by what means they could make their way around the headland with dromedaries if the tide was in. Conversation, however, was so difficult to hold in consequence of the rocking motion and thunder of the feet of the dromedaries, that Abdamon simply nodded to Baana that he would explain later.

The heavens were becoming lighter. The first rays of dawn were not more than an hour distant. They were now about two hundred and fifty furlongs from Jerusalem and the lights of the city, reflected from the sky above, had long since dimmed and passed out of sight. Tyre was still four hundred and seventy furlongs distant by the road that led along the sea coast. Without further conversation, they urged their swift beasts to greater speed. The dromedaries had shown no signs of weariness and were telling off the distance with undiminished fleetness. This great speed was maintained hour after hour until finally the sun arose in the east over the great ridge which lies along the right bank of the river Jordan. The waters of the Great Sea were now plainly in sight, sweeping far out to the west, and in another hour the riders would have passed out of the realm of Israel's king and into that of the mighty ruler of Tyre, and speedily thereafter they would reach the great headland or spur of the mountains of Lebanon, which jutted out into the sea. The thoughts of Abdamon were upon the state of the tide and as to what it would be upon their arrival at the "Stairway of Tyre." If the tide was out he did not believe that the dromedaries could make their way in safety over the

slanting natural columns of stone without laming or injuring themselves so that they could not proceed further. If the tide was within an hour either way from its greatest height, by the plan worked out in his mind, he had hopes of rounding the promotory and speeding on up the coast to the Phoenician capital.

Shortly, the great frowning headland of the mountains of Lebanon showed dimly up the coast line, and they knew that they had already passed out of the territory of King Solomon, and were upon Phoenician soil. At this time Abdamon signaled to Baana to follow and, swerving his dromedary to the left from the roadway, made boldly for the sea. In a short space the little Phoenician city of Achzib came into view. This place is located directly upon the seacoast, and but a short distance from the great promontory which can be clearly seen to the north. Abdamon, who had followed the sea most of his life, had touched at Achzib and was familiar with the place. In the construction of the great Temple and Temple buildings at Jerusalem, the workmen and sailors of the King of Tyre were constantly moving down the seacoast from Phoenicia with enormous floats made from great logs drawn by galleons manned by Tyrian sailors. These floats were loaded with the hewn fir and cedar logs to be used in the building of the Temple. Abdamon knew from experience that the floats, towed by the galleons, never started southward around the "Stairway of Tyre" when the tide was flooding, because of the danger of being driven landward by unfavorable winds and dashed to pieces against the great stone wall. He knew, therefore, that if the tide was nearly at its highest point or, at best, had passed its flood and was ebbing, that the galleons would be passing the city of Achzib on their way south to Joppa.

They rushed forward upon their dromedaries at the same speed that they had maintained throughout the night and early morning. In a short time they arrived at Achzib and dashed through it to the sea coast. There were no galleons or floats in sight, and Baana felt that their tremendous

exertions in trying to reach Tyre might be of no avail, but Abdamon understood the ways of the sea, and he began at once to study the height of the tide. Having satisfied himself in that regard, he shouted to Baana to follow him and the two dromedaries raced northward along the sands of the coast. The great promontory was a short distance ahead of them, and to Baana's mind their race toward it was now fruitless. But long before they had reached the headland, dark objects appeared on the surface of the sea coming out of the north from beyond the frowning mountain. Abdamon urged his dromedary to greater speed and signaled to Baana to do the same. When within a short distance of the promontory, Abdamon brought the dromedaries to a stop and waited for the approach of the Phoenician barks towing their great floats of logs and timber. Shortly they rounded the headland and started down the coastline. Abdamon signaled to them frantically and Baana, who was alternately watching the movements of the barks and the signals of Abdamon, noticed that there was some peculiar method in Abdamon's gestures. To Baana's surprise and joy, the leading bark changed its course and bore directly down upon them. In a little while its keel grated in the sand and Abdamon, having dismounted from his dromedary and left it with Baana who remained upon his mount, boarded the bark and was soon in consultation with its master. After a little time Baana realized that the sailors on the bark were working the great float, which it was towing, up to the sands of the coastline. He also noticed that others of the sailors who were upon the float were rolling the load of cedar and fir logs from the float into the sea. Soon the deck was cleared and the bark was brought up as close as possible to the beach, where a rude gangway was swung into position from the deck to the sands of the beach. Abdamon now signaled to Baana to come forward with the dromedaries and dismount. Abdamon, leading his mount, had no difficulty in taking it on board the float and Baana followed, after which the gangway was torn apart and the pieces of it

loaded upon the float. The bark then hauled out, manned by both rowers and sails and in a little while was headed in the direction whence it came, towing the great float with the dromedaries upon it.

In this manner in the brief space of half an hour from the time Baana and Abdamon boarded the float with their beasts, they rounded the headland and the float being brought up to the beach to the north side of the "Stairway of Tyre" they debarked their dromedaries and again mounted them and sped northward along the seacoast.

Before the hour had reached high twelve, Baana and Abdamon were on the mainland opposite Tyre, had left their animals in charge of a keeper and were making their way to the city, across the arm of the sea in a boat hired from among the boatmen always in waiting on the mainland.

Now that their destination was immediately before them, Baana and Abdamon talked freely with each other in Hebrew before the Phoenician boatman, who could speak only his native tongue. Without scroll or token from King Solomon, how were they to obtain an audience with the puissant monarch of Tyre? If received by him, how could they make him believe the truth of their story? This was a matter they had never thought of and it now concerned them mightily as to how they would accomplish the purpose of their mission. It seemed impossible, in the garish blaze of day, that they had passed through the adventures and hazardous experiences of the night just gone.

Having arrived at the island of stone upon which Tyre was built, the boatman followed along the perpendicular wall, which rose straight out of the sea, until he came to a great archway over the grand canal through the city, into which he turned. This was the sea canal cut by the kings of Tyre, in former ages, from one coastline to the other through the center of the island and was arched over at each end by Tyre's great wall, forty cubits thick and sixty cubits high.

Once within the canal, the boatman, urged on by Abdamon, soon brought his boat up at one of the stairways which led down from the center of the city to the surface of the water and the two messengers, having paid him, ascended the stairway to the city. Abdamon led the way because of his knowledge of Tyre and his greater freedom with the Phoenician tongue. They reached the palace of the mighty Hiram, ruler of Tyre, Sidon and all of the Phoenician coast for a great distance northward. They had difficulty in making their way into the palace. The captain of the guards took personal charge of them after detailed explanations and, with attendants, escorted them by a secret corridor to the private chambers of the king. He bade his guardsmen remain with them outside of the private chambers while he laid the matter before the king. In a short time he returned and admitted Baana, Abdamon and the guard to the king's chambers.

Hiram of Tyre was at that time a man of great age, having already sat upon the throne of Tyre more than six decades. He was tall and stately, with long white hair and flowing beard. Notwithstanding his age, his strength appeared to be unimpaired. During the relation of the story of the volunteer messengers his manner was that of one greatly interested, and his eyes, flashing fire, boded no good for the enemies of the son of David, who had been his friend for a long lifetime.

Abdamon, seafaring man as he was and accustomed to all conditions and hardened by stress of circumstances, was greatly abashed in the presence of this powerful ruler. Baana was still more confused and somewhat haltingly related his story, then, under the sharp questioning of Hiram, the details were brought out. Baana was able to give the king minute information on matters with which Abdamon was unfamiliar.

Near the conclusion of the interview the king asked them if they had any credentials by which he might feel sure of the truth of their story. Baana explained again that it was

not possible for them to bring credentials. The messengers of Solomon had been shot from the dromedaries a short distance north of the Damascus gate. He and Abdamon had remained in hiding farther north of the ambuscade, that their own lives might be saved in order to carry the message of King Solomon to Tyre. They could not bring the credentials that might have been upon the bodies of the dead messengers because of the necessity for haste. If they had attempted to return to the place of the ambuscade after capturing the dromedaries they themselves would have met the same fate as the messengers, and the kingdom of Solomon might then be destroyed by the beseiging armies.

Baana, now forgetting that he was in the presence of the greatest maritime monarch in the world, became eloquent in his pleading with the king to send all the forces he could command for the protection of King Solomon and his realm. King Hiram pondered the situation deeply. His piercing eyes bore straight into those of Baana and Abdamon. In their wild race to reach the King of Tyre, Baana's long coat had become unfastened and suddenly Hiram of Tyre arose from his seat to his full height, strode rapidly toward Baana, seized the corners of his garment and pulled them apart. He then demanded of Baana in the Phoenician tongue that he tell where he had procured the gold chain suspended around his neck. Baana bethought himself of the marvelous talisman given him by his mother,—the chain and pendant upon his breast. He quickly pulled the amulet forth and lifting the chain over his head handed it to the king who studied it closely and after having satisfied himself regarding it, laid it upon an onyx pedestal of great beauty near the immense ivory chair in which he had been seated and turned his back upon Baana, Abdamon and the guards present, and appeared to be engaged in prayer. After a short space, he picked up the golden chain, with its symbol, and returned it to Baana and, speaking in the Phoenician language, directed that he and Abdamon return at once to King Solomon and advise him that the friend of his father,

Hiram of Tyre, would immediately come to his assistance with all of the military forces, both land and sea, at his command. He bade the captain of his guard summon a scrivener with his biblus rolls and reeds that he, the king might cause to be prepared a scroll to be sent to Solomon, King of Israel, by the messengers.

The scrivener appeared immediately with the rolls and reeds and the king directed that this message be traced upon the biblus rolls by the hand of the scrivener.

"From a father:

"Hiram, exalted of Tyre and Sidon and the seacoast of Phoenicia,

To his son,

"Solomon, King of Israel,

Greeting:

"Hiram of Tyre greets his son,

"the son of David, the friend of Hiram,

"and sends this message:

"Your faithful messengers have brought word of your danger. Your father's friend, Hiram of Tyre, hastens to your aid with all forces possible, by land and sea.

Hiram."

The papyrus scroll was attached to and rolled around a small roller and was delivered by the scrivener to Baana. The king ordered Baana and Abdamon to return to Jerusalem with the utmost despatch. Orders were given to the captain of the guard to send a detachment of military forces with them, as far as the frontier between Phoenicia and Palestine.

CHAPTER XII.

The Perfidy of a Great Queen

Baana and Abdamon were quickly transported across the arm of the sea to the mainland where they remounted their swift dromedaries, accompanied by a detachment of a hundred armed horsemen, sent with them by the King of Tyre. The dromedaries and the horsemen sped down the sea coast in the direction from whence the messengers had come. Arrived at the "Stairway of Tyre," they found galleons and floats awaiting them. Messengers, dromedaries and horsemen were all quickly transported around the great promontory and again landed upon the seacoast at its southern side. Here the messengers and horsemen remounted and sped southerly through the ancient Phoenician town of Achzib. From here the road swerved inland toward Jerusalem. There was no necessity for even slacking their gait at Achzib, and the mounted messengers and horsemen sped on. Having arrived at the frontier of Palestine, the captain of the horsemen bade the messengers Godspeed, halted his company and watched the messengers upon their way until they had disappeared from sight, headed for the Damascus road.

Baana and Abdamon drove forward upon their dromedaries hour by hour, without slacking their pace, until finally the northern walls of the city of Jerusalem appeared in sight. Baana signaled to Abdamon and they slowed down their beasts. A discussion was held between them as to how they should attempt to enter the city of Jerusalem. Baana's great fight with Fanor and his associates had, of course, been the means of placing lookouts for him at many places for the purpose of capturing both Baana and Abdamon. They reasoned, however, that Fanor would have to do this secretly

as it would be in defiance of the king's authority; therefore could not be done openly unless internal warfare had already broken out between the king and the traitors inside the walls of the city. Even in this event, the king's armies and guards must still be in control, and they would be protected unless ambushed and secretly slain.

After some discussion of this subject, they decided to drive onward, try to obtain an audience with the king, report the ambuscade, the slaying by the five crossbowmen of the original messengers to Tyre and the substitution of themselves in their stead, the carrying of the word to Tyre, and then to present the scroll sent by the King of Tyre to King Solomon.

They drove their great mounts onward and soon reached the Damascus gate. They had no difficulty in passing through this gate, as they were now familiar with all methods of ingress and egress to and from the city and had gained the knowledge necessary to enable them to pass the guards. Once inside the city, they turned their dromedaries to the Temple quarter for the purpose of reaching the palace of the king. Having arrived at this quarter, they obtained admission as messengers of King Solomon, being mounted upon his personal dromedaries. The dromedaries were taken by the messengers to the royal stables and there turned back to their keepers. Baana and Abdamon then attempted to locate Hiram Abif, believing that he should be informed quickly of the situation, and also thinking that they could obtain an audience with the king better through him than in any other way. After hastening to his quarters, they were informed that he was absent. Then they turned their steps to King Solomon's palace and, having arrived there, after some parley, were permitted to have an audience with Achizar, the governor of the palace. To him they explained their case and he at once proceeded with them to the audience chamber of the king.

There Achizar was advised by the court attendants that the king was in his private chamber, and Achizar, having

the right of entrance to any and all parts of the palace, signaled to Abdamon and Baana to follow him, and rushed forward through corridors and antechambers until he reached the private chamber of the king. After stating his business to a guard at the great doors of this chamber, the guard disappeared, and finally returned with instructions from the king, that he and the messengers were to be admitted. Once in this great chamber they observed that the king was not alone. With him was the mysterious woman of great beauty, whom Baana had encountered in the queen's palace, before his departure from Jerusalem for Tyre. It was clear that she was a close friend of King Solomon and all of the strange feeling which possessed Baana before, that he had met this woman at another time, again arose within him. Achizar approached the king and stated that two messengers had arrived from the King of Tyre with important messages. At this moment the beautiful lady, recognizing Baana, screamed, and he started with surprise. It was the same scream, the same voice, the same tone as that of the secret envoy in the stone audience chamber of Fanor, when Baana had slain the other envoy by cutting his throat with the copper chisel. But Baana remembered that the person who screamed in the chamber of Fanor was masked and garbed as a man, although he knew her to be a woman, at that time, by the scream. He was now still more puzzled by the action of this woman because of the fact that he imagined he had seen her before, and yet the masked envoy in the chamber of Fanor had never been seen by Baana, to his knowledge, with mask removed.

The woman's eyes blazed fire at Baana and Abdamon. She seemed about to arise from the great enameled throne of ivory and precious woods on which she was seated and then it seemed, upon second thought, she resolved to hold her counsel for a time. Achizar stated briefly to the king that it was Baana who had related to Hiram Abif the treachery of Shishak and the King of Assyria. King Solomon bade Baana speak and he did so, relating the suspicions of Abda-

mon and himself that the messengers despatched to Tyre might never reach there, and of the haste of himself and Abdamon in passing out of the city and later discovering the ambuscade on the Damascus road. He told of the concealment of Abdamon and himself a distance beyond the ambush where the five crossbowmen were concealed; of their capture of the dromedaries after the messengers had been shot to death; lastly of the flight to Tyre, of their audience with King Hiram and his message upon the papyrus scroll, which Baana had concealed in his bosom.

At this time Baana reached inside of his coat to pull out the roll and deliver it to the king, but was suddenly halted by the excited voice of the woman, who said:

"O, puissant king! hearken not to the lies and falsehoods of these murderers of thy imperial messengers. I have remained silent till now, that I might learn the enormity of their treachery. Two of the attendants of my palace with one of the priests of my sacred altars, who recently left Memphis by ship for Joppa, coming to join my household at Jerusalem, were driven to sea by diverse winds, and made the land, a distance farther up the coast at the village of Dor, and crossing the plain of Sharon, made their way to the Damascus road. Being belated, they were coming southward on this road at a time when thy royal messengers passed out of the Damascus gate on their way to Tyre. The priest of my worship and the attendants saw the messengers upon their fleet dromedaries speeding northward and then, to their horror, saw two crossbowmen at the side of the road level their crossbows at the oncoming messengers. The distance was too great for my people to warn them. The crossbows were no sooner brought to the shoulders of the archers than the twanging of the bows rang out, and thy messengers to Tyre fell dead upon the Damascus road. The priest and attendants of my household, being indifferently armed and unskilled in fighting, felt themselves unable to cope with the murderers and concealed themselves at the edge of the highway to see what next would be done. The

murderers caught the dromedaries from which thy royal messengers had been slain, mounted them and sped northward on the Damascus road.

"My people were so shocked by this occurrence and so fearful of the consequence of their attempting to enter by the Damascus gate that, after taking counsel with each other, they returned westward across the land of Canaan to the Great Sea and there, in the boat of a ferryman, journeyed southward along the coast to Joppa and then returned to Jerusalem by the Joppa road, deeming their lives to be safer by so doing. It is less than the running of the sands in the glass since they found their way to my palace and communicated this to me. They described the crossbowmen well. I know that the murderers of thy royal messengers stand before thee. I send now for the priest of Isis and my palace attendants, and shall make thee certain that these are the murderers. Do not receive the scroll from this assassin. It may be saturated with a subtle perfume which brings death to him who unwinds the scroll."

The astonishment of King Solomon, Achizar and his attendants could not be described. Baana, at this monstrous falsehood, hastily asked Achizar who the beautiful woman could be. Achizar whispered that she was King Solomon's royal queen, daughter of Shishak, Paraoh of Egypt.

All was now clear to Baana, and he told Achizar his belief concerning the queen. Achizar whispered to Baana hurriedly that he also believed the queen to be in league with her father, Shishak and the King of Assyria, to overthrow King Solomon and subject Palestine to slavery.

"But," said Achizar in a low voice: "We cannot relate this to the king, as he would immediately order us executed. It must be proven to him if only we can do so soon enough to save the destruction of the realm, the life of the king, our holy Temple and the treasure of David! Thou and thy companion Abdamon will, undoubtedly, be confined in the dungeons, if not put to death at once. If thy lives are spared even but a few turns of the hour-glass, I have hope of saving

thee from death. But mark well, if any means of escape offers, seize it and flee to the seacoast, because there is no escape beyond the Jordan."

The queen had despatched messengers to her palace who shortly returned with an Egyptian priest, clad in the robes of his pagan worship, with the sacred bull, Apis, embroidered in threads of gold upon his breast. With him were two swarthy Egyptians who, it appeared, could not speak Hebrew. The priest, however, had wider learning and when questioned by the queen, stared at Baana and Abdamon, then stated to King Solomon in fairly good Hebrew that they were the crossbowmen who had murdered the king's messengers. Thereafter the Egyptian priest addressed the two attendants in a language of which he, apparently, thought King Solomon, and all present, could have no knowledge. At the beginning of this conversation between the priest and the attendants, Abdamon displayed so much astonishment that to keep the priest and others from seeing it, he turned his back and appeared to cover his face with his hands.

The priest spoke to the two Egyptians in a sailor's slang used by pirates off the Egyptian coast which could have been known only, as Abdamon thought, to men who had followed the sea and come in contact with the pirates. This conversation with the queen's attendants was readily understood by Abdamon, and related to Achizar shortly afterward. The priest merely directed these attendants that they were to say in Egyptian that they identified the two men as crossbowmen and murderers of the messengers of King Solomon. This, they immediately did to the king who, being master of the Egyptian tongue, readily understood their declarations. When they had finished, the king ordered Achizar to have Baana and Abdamon put in chains at once, kept under a strict guard and put to death before the end of the day. Achizar signified his obedience to the king's command and, summoning palace attendants under his orders, had

the two friends manacled, chained to each other and led from the palace.

Once out of the presence of the king, Achizar directed his attendants to retire a short distance. He then held a whispered conversation with Baana, after which he signaled the attendants to return, and ordered them to secure the prisoners in certain dungeons of the Temple grounds. This the attendants did, and Baana and Abdamon were left in confinement.

After the departure of Achizar with the prisoners, the queen held an excited conversation with King Solomon, pledging the loyalty of her father, the ruler of Egypt, and stating that she had received word that a messenger from the King of Tyre, was now without the palace, awaiting audience.

King Solomon immediately ordered that the messenger be received and, in a short time, he appeared in the garb of a messenger from Tyre and kneeling upon one knee before the king, held up a roll which he said, in faultless Hebrew, was a message from his king to Solomon, King of Israel.

Solomon signaled to a scrivener in attendance to receive the roll and interpret it to him. It read as follows:

"From King Hiram, ruler of Tyre, Sidon and of all the lands from Palestine northward bordering upon the Great Sea, to Solomon, King of Palestine:

"Greeting:

"The King of Tyre sends to King Solomon of Palestine his loyalty and prayers for a long and peaceful reign.

"Know, oh king of the Israelites, that Hiram, King of Tyre, has made a league with Shishak, ruler of all the lands of Egypt and of Ethiopia, and we do now ask the King of Palestine to join the league with us that we may make head against all adversaries which beset our thrones.

"Our royal messenger will bring to us thy consent to the triple pact. Then Shishak, Ruler of the South, and our-

selves, Hiram, Ruler of the North, will join thee at Jerusalem, to seal the pact.

"May thy days be many and filled with glory."

Signed, "Hiram, king."

There were those who witnessed the coming of this messenger, heard the reading of the message, and, from their places of concealment, studied the face of King Solomon as the message was read. The secret listeners watched and waited for the king's answer as if the world, and all of its civilization, hung in the balance. When the answer came, the secret watchers kneeled and bowed their heads in prayer to such gods as their faith taught them to obey.

The result of this message from the greatest maritime king in the world to the greatest king of any religious people of all times was startling. Solomon, it has been said, was the wisest of men, but even Solomon, as has been seen, could be betrayed by falsehoods. It was not to be so at this time. The king pondered deeply and then made a signal which brought his guards and men-at-arms from the various places about the great chamber where they had been stationed. He pointed to the Tyrian messenger garbed in his robes of office, apparently a subject of a foreign and friendly monarch, and shouted to the guards:

"Seize that man and put him in chains. Send for Achizar and instruct him to have this messenger beheaded. He is a traitor and a spy and was not sent to our court from the court of our friend, the Ruler of Tyre."

With great rapidity the palace guards surrounded the messenger and his hands and feet were chained together so that movement on his part, independent of the guards, was impossible. He was further linked by heavy manacles to guards upon each side of him and taken from the presence of the king.

The queen screamed and besought the king not to bring on a war with so powerful a monarch as Hiram of Tyre by imprisoning and putting his messenger to death. Solomon

was firm and replied that the messenger was an imposter and had not been sent by the King of Tyre.

"How knowest thou that?" demanded the queen.

Solomon answered:

"Hiram of Tyre was the friend of my father and is my friend and stands in the room of my father David. No scroll from the hand of the King of Tyre to me, his son, through his friendship with my father, ever comes couched in the words of this lying writ. It begins:

"From Hiram, King of Tyre, and all else, to Solomon, King of Israel, Greetings":

"But the truthful messages from my friend to me always begin:

FROM A FATHER TO HIS SON:
GREETING"

And, by this alone, I know the falseness of this message and that its bearer is not from Tyre, but doubtless from some monarch who desires to subjugate Palestine to his rule and acquire the treasure of David and the Temple of Jehovah."

The rage of the queen burst like a mighty storm which had been long pent up. She now threw off all masks and disguises and charged King Solomon with stupidity and inability to rule a people. She said to him that his God was a creature of the vaporings of his priesthood and that his religion was a mockery and his Temple a farce. She declared that the only true religion was the worship of Isis and Horus and of Apis, the sacred bull, and that she would not longer remain his queen, nor in Jerusalem, but would return to Egypt with her priests and her train of court attendants and her idol the golden bull, where she might follow the worship of her ancestors and of her father, Shishak, the greatest monarch in the world.

Thus ended the attempt of King Solomon, wisest of all rulers, to cement a friendship between a race of people who worshipped bulls, cats and other things of a less holy character and who, from the very fibre of their minds, and

the makeup of their personalities, never, so long as the stream of time flows, could unite and remain loyal to a race of such opposite nature as the Israelites. A permanent union of peoples dissimilar in religion, language, literature and thought, could not be accomplished even by Solomon. It was indeed a mistake that Solomon did not at the moment order this treacherous and rebellious pagan woman to the headsman's block. He was yet to learn that her palace, in sight of the very Temple of Jehovah itself, erected for her by himself at great cost in the Temple grounds was the headquarters for the worship of the sacred bull, and that Shishak, father of the queen and Paraoh of Egypt, used this perfidious woman as a spy and informer to assist in his plans for the acquiring of Palestine and the seizing of the treasure of David; that when the animals for the sacrifice upon the altar of Jehovah were taken from the royal stables to the altar, they passed over a way of which the queen's palace windows commanded a full view and she, with her priests, women and slaves, would shout curses from behind her palace walls at the priests of Solomon who were leading the animals to the sacrifice.

By the sufferance of the king she was now permitted to depart with all of her entourage to the land of Egypt and there, with her father, the Pharaoh, to plan the invasion and capture of Palestine. Had she been put to death at once by the king, thousands of innocent lives would have been saved. But this was not to be, and the results which flowed from the kindness of this great monarch form one of the bloodiest pages in the annals of the human race.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Court of the Greatest King of Battles

Before the night was over a swarthy messenger of undoubted Egyptian origin, mounted on a fleet Arabian steed, left Jerusalem by the Joppa gate, sometimes called the valley gate, and followed the Joppa road with all possible speed until he had traversed the three hundred furlongs between Jerusalem and Joppa. Having arrived at the seacoast while it was yet early morning, he hastily surveyed the roadstead to ascertain the shipping anchored there. He soon found what he desired, this being an Egyptian galley, equipped with both sails and rowers. The horseman was, apparently, provided with ample means, for he arranged with the captain of the galley to transport him southerly, with utmost speed, to a destination which would be given him at sea. Having provided for the care of his magnificent Arab charger, the messenger boarded the galley which bore southwesterly and put out from the roadstead with all the speed which it could make with both sails and oars. The messenger was moody and thoughtful. He appeared to take no notice of his surroundings nor of the operation of the galley. After they had been out from land for several hours he asked the captain if he was familiar with the coast as far as the mouth of the Nile and if he had navigated the Nile as far as Memphis, the capital of Egypt. The captain informed him that he was constantly engaged in coastwise business between Joppa and Tyre on the north, and Memphis and points even farther distant on the south. The messenger then directed him to put on all sail and crowd his rowers to the utmost for Memphis, and handed the captain an additional stipend to induce haste.

In time, the distance between Joppa and one of the many mouths of the Nile was traversed and the galley turned up an arm of that great river where it empties into the Mediterranean Sea. The journey up the Nile to the city of Memphis was soon completed and the messenger, having discharged the galley and paid the captain more than the agreed charter, quickly disappeared in the great city. In time he reached the palace of Shishak, Pharaoh of Egypt and Monarch of Ethiopia. It appeared that he was well known there and that the various captains and officers of the king's guard were in some manner subject to his orders. He quickly sped through the various corridors and vestibules of the palace, and finally reached the living chambers of the king. The personal guards of the king at these doorways received whispered instructions from the messenger, saluted, disappeared behind massive doors and shortly appeared with a guard from Shishak to escort the messenger to a personal audience with him. The messenger passed through columns of armed guards who brought their spears and broadswords to "present" in honor of the messenger as he passed through the lines. Once inside the king's private chambers the king, at sight of the messenger, rushed forward and embraced him.

"I am overglad to see thee, my son; but what brings thee hither at this time?"

"I have grave news for thee, my father," said Akirop (for he was none other than the horseman who had met Baana at the ford of the Jordan).

"Recline with me upon the divan, my son, and when thou hast rested, relate thy news."

Akirop, after eating some fruit and drinking choice wine, related to his father the happenings at Jerusalem. He told of the combat with Baana in the chamber of Fanor with Metusael, himself and the secret envoy. The Pharaoh winced and showed great concern when Akirop told of the death of the envoy by some unknown instrument in the hands of Baana. The king was so moved by the relation of this

event that he was obliged to stop Akirop for a time until he could recover himself. In the conversation between the king and his son, it transpired that the secret envoy who had been slain by Baana, was a younger son of the king, and the brother of Akirop.

After a time the king bade Akirop proceed, and he detailed the audience in King Solomon's palace, at which it was decided to send two messengers to the King of Tyre to call for assistance in repelling the armies of Shishak and Ben Hadad, King of Assyria. He related that the information of the despatch of these messengers had been communicated to Fanor and himself by King Solomon's queen, the daughter of Shishak and sister of Akirop. The plan to assassinate the king's messengers to Tyre by the five crossbowmen was explained, and it appeared to please the Pharaoh mightily that this plan was successful, and that the two messengers were slain on the Damascus road north of Jerusalem. Akirop went on, however, and informed his father, that Baana and Abdamon, a goatherd and a sailor, had captured the dromedaries whose panniers had been emptied by the shooting of the royal messengers and that they had journeyed on to Tyre, notwithstanding certain of the armed forces in the north of Palestine, under the control of Akirop and his brothers, had been notified by the heliograph to capture and slay these volunteer messengers, but that they had performed what was thought to be a miracle by making their way around the "Stairway of Tyre," finally reaching the capital of Hiram, King of Phoenicia. He then explained that Baana and Abdamon had returned to Jerusalem with a scroll from Hiram of Tyre and that, through his sister the queen, Baana and Abdamon had been ordered beheaded, thus preventing the scroll from reaching King Solomon. A false envoy had in turn been equipped in the garb of a messenger from Hiram of Tyre and sent before King Solomon with a forged scroll. Akirop explained further that the scroll was so worded that its forgery was apparent to King Solomon, who had immediately or-

dered the false messenger beheaded. The clash between the king and queen was related. Akirop then detailed his real business to his father which was to despatch at once sufficient fighting ships and galleons to Joppa to receive the queen and her entourage and bring them in safety to Memphis. He said that the queen with her priests, serving men and women, white and black slaves, her great idol, the golden bull, Apis, and all of the equipment of her household had ben given free pass by Solomon to the seacoast, and they would be at Joppa upon the third day from this.

The king immediately summoned the ruler of his palace and ordered him to despatch instructions, arranging at once for a flotilla of armed ships, galleys and galleons and for the private argosy of the king itself to be despatched from Memphis with all haste to Joppa, there to receive the king's daughter, the retiring Queen of Palestine, and to bring her with her people, idols and gods, to Memphis.

The king, and his son, Akirop, then discussed the plans of Shishak in conjunction with his friend, Ben Hadad, the King of Assyria, to mass their forces on the left bank of the Jordan for the purpose of taking the city of Jerusalem, installing the bull in the great Temple, capturing the treasure of David, overrunning all of the rich lands of Canaan and making all the Israelites slaves for the tilling of the soil, as they had been in Egypt half a thousand years before.

The Pharaoh, Shishak, although a man of years, was yet in the full flower of his strength and manhood. He was tall and muscular, like all Egyptians, swarthy of complexion, with black hair flecked with gray, black eyebrows and long black eyelashes. His head was massive and showed great administrative power, with enormous strength to execute the plans which his mentality indicated his ability to think out. But the massive thickness of his head above the ears and his beetling brows told clearly that he was cold, cruel, heartless and possessed of none of the gentler or finer sentiments. His ruling passion was to extend his domain in all directions. He had, through many campaigns, brought

all of Ethiopia under Egyptian rule, all of that great territory at that time being under the power of the Egyptian king, the teeming thousands of inhabitants thereof being his slaves. The wealth of Ethiopia in gold, silver and copper, rosewood, ebony and boxwood, in gums, nuts and spices, in ivory and skins, was the personal property of the Pharaoh. Not satisfied with this tremendous addition of territory, five times greater than the area of Egypt, his original birthright, he now sought to subject all of Palestine, with the rich land of Canaan flowing with milk and honey, to his rule. He desired to make the Israelites slaves for Egypt, as they were five hundred years before.

But above everything else, he coveted the great treasure which had been brought together by the Hebrew prophets, judges and kings for generations, enlarged by David, and tremendously increased by Solomon for the purpose of erecting to Jehovah the Temple with its many buildings, walls, arches, towers, and stairways. To accomplish this purpose most effectively he had pretended a friendship for the King of Israel, even to the extent of permitting his favorite daughter to become Solomon's queen. This situation was extremely advantageous to him because this daughter continually reported to Shishak, her father, all doings of every kind at Jerusalem which would be of interest or benefit to him in his campaign to reduce the Israelites to subjection.

Even the Temple itself and the great Fraternity which controlled its workmen, were filled with traitors and emissaries of Shishak. Steady outpourings of discontent were started and encouraged to turn the Temple workmen against King Solomon. Metusael, Fanor and Akirop, the brothers, were Past Masters, or Princes, in the Fraternity. They were leaders among the workmen and were constantly employing means to create dissatisfaction throughout the Temple forces and in all other quarters as well. The insidious murmur against Hiram Abif, chief architect of the Temple, because he was a subject of the King of Tyre, and not an

Israelite, found its source in the three brothers and those under their direction.

Shishak had used every possible means to dissipate the strength of King Solomon's fighting and working forces. He had long prepared for a general attack upon the eastern side of Palestine, because that would be the quarter from which the Israelites would least expect an attack. Notwithstanding his great military power and his plans covering the long period, he doubted his military strength in coping with Palestine and Phoenicia combined. If he could have separated Israel from Tyre the result would have been easy; but the trained sailors and seafaring men of the King of Tyre were at that time reputed to be the most indomitable fighters in the world. The empire of the King of Tyre ranked as first in the world, not only in commercial and mercantile activities but also in naval power to protect its commerce. By the shortest route, it was only a matter of seven hundred or eight hundred furlongs from Tyre to Jerusalem, and the armies of Tyre could quickly come to the aid of King Solomon. These things had been carefully worked out by the Pharaoh and he had decided that to match the forces of the King of Tyre, he would make a league with the Assyrian king and join his armies with Ben Hadad's by traveling east around the southern shores of the Dead Sea, thence northward, joining the King of Assyria in the land of Reuben and Gad. He planned to send his troops in small detachments so that they would appear to be caravans or desert travelers, for the purpose of keeping his plans secret until his great armies, with those of Assyria, were ready to sweep across the river Jordan and over Canaan. He discussed all of these weighty details with his younger son, Akirop, and they decided that it was now more important than ever to move with the utmost despatch because of the fact that their plans, to some extent, had become known to King Solomon.

Shihsak stated to his son that advance messengers from the King of Assyria had reached Memphis shortly before and

brought information of an embassy from Assyria to be expected at any time to discuss the plans for the union of the great armies of Egypt and Assyria and to develop the plans for the seige of Jerusalem and the overruning of Palestine.

The Pharaoh unfolded to his son a portion of his great dream of world empire. It appeared that Shishak, whose daughter was the wife of Solomon and his official queen, was long a betrayer of his son-in-law. He had for years been planning for world dominion and with that purpose in view had expanded his realm southward beyond the confines of Egypt until it now covered all Ethiopia and every portion of the country to the south which seemed to possess any value either in natural wealth or in the number of its black population which could be used by Shishak as soldiers or slaves. Nothing more remained, so far as Africa was concerned, for Shishak to conquer. That continent was entirely subjected to the rule of the mighty Pharaoh, and he had begun to look to the east for greater and wealthier territory.

It developed in the course of the conference with his son, the Prince Akirop, that he contemplated, step by step, subjugating all of the world to his rule. It appeared that the league which he had made with Ben Hadad, King of Assyria, was regarded by him merely as a temporary shift to enable him to conquer Palestine, and while doing so to resist the forces of Tyre. Palestine being conquered and Jerusalem taken, with the bull installed in her mighty Temple, her great walls used to protect the power of Egypt, and the greatest treasure of the world in his hands, he then purposed to drive the Assyrians, his allies, back over the river Jordan and out upon the plains of Shinar, and there completely to destroy them. This would give him dominion over Assyria and over that vast territory which is included between the great rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, and would plant his standards throughout all of Mesopotamia and beyond Babylon as far as the plains of Iran, even to Ind.

With this vast territory under his rule he would be master of all Africa and of all Asia, except Tyre and Pho-

necia. With the world forces at his command he could then brush Tyre from the face of the earth. He would tear down its great walls, lay waste its wealthy city, carrying to Memphis all of the gold, silver and copper; all of the precious stones, the expensive fabrics and the countless treasures of Tyre. With the treasures of David and Tyre combined, with all of Africa and Asia under his feet, he could then lay waste the cities on the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, even to the Pillars of Hercules, and could enslave all of their people. This would give him complete dominion of all the world and he would be lord of lords and king of kings. The worship of the bull would be the world worship. He purposed to raise this three sons, Metusael, Fanor and Akirop, to the dignity of vassal kings and bestow upon each one a kingdom as great as Egypt was when Shishak ascended its throne. He purposed that his daughter, King Solomon's wife, should be made queen over a territory half the size of a continent. He designed that himself, and his family under him, should hold the power of life and death over every inhabitant of the earth. With all this, he was a pagan, an idolator and a worshipper of idols so base that it is inconceivable that a mind great in military and political matters could permit itself to descend to such groveling imbecility. It is contrary to common sense that so able a man could actually believe in the power of animals to guide and protect the destinies of intelligent beings who were in every way superior to the objects of worship; but it should be understood that the worship of the bull had been the ruling passion of the Egyptians for thousands of years, and a great priesthood had grown up around this worship, which fed fat upon the treasure wrung from the toil and slavery of the common people by the tax-gatherers of the Pharaoh. The worship of the bull, therefore, like other priest-ridden sects, was a splendid machine by which the mass of the people was more completely enslaved under the Pharaoh and ruling classes trib-

utary to him. The worship of the bull made his autocratic power permanently secure.

It was his purpose to compel every human being to bow himself to the earth and crawl upon his belly before the sacred bull, thereby establishing more and more firmly the power of the Pharaoh. The worship of the bull was his strongest passion because, in its final analysis, it was the worship of himself.

The history of this brutal but powerful ruler indicates that he was able to execute all of his plans and place the whole world as bond slaves under his feet. Only his death or an intervening miracle of some kind could prevent the accomplishment of his designs and the ultimate destruction of the Christian religion and of civilization itself. Even his death might not stop the onward rush of his great armies in the subjugation of the world. His three sons, Metusael, Fanor and Akirop, ranking in age and authority in the order named, all of whom had displayed great power in the way of strategy and the working through of machinations for the destruction of their enemies and the conquering of all they came in contact with, not already subject to their rule, would carry out his plans. These three princes and the princess of Egypt might develop into as great military genuises as their all-powerful father.

The outlook for civilization, for the great races of highly developed and enlightened peoples such as the Israelites, the Phoenicians, the Greeks and the Byzantines, was indeed gloomy. If these people could have known of the transcendant plans of the Pharaoh, they might have combined in time to stop them. Certainly, if the King of Assyria had known that his sworn ally was merely using him as a means afterwards to destroy his power, be would have drawn up his forces against the ruler of Egypt instead of with him; but these things could not be known in the existing state of the plans of Shishak. Communication at that time was not rapid and was only by special messengers or envoys sent from one monarch or city to another, and there were none in

Egypt who had knowledge of these plans who would convey them to the other nations of the world. It is true that King Solomon, through Baana and the fury of the queen at her parting, had an inkling of the plans of Shishak and Ben Hadad, but the magnitude of the designs of the Pharaoh had not yet been revealed to King Solomon, nor to anyone except to his own sons and daughter.

Before proceeding further in military matters Shishak, the king, and the prince Akirop awaited the coming of the embassy of the King of Assyria.

The palace of the Pharaoh at Memphis included within its grounds and outer walls every comfort known to the Egyptians at that time, and as it was an age of wealth and power of Egypt's rulers the magnificence of her palaces has never since been exceeded or even equaled. The great palace proper occupied by the king was, in its general design, of Egyptian architecture. The building was of immense height, designed so especially that the king might look out from its topmost towers over the greater portion of his original territory, the land of Egypt. The sides of the palace were buttressed by fluted pilasters of the width of twenty cubits at the base, ten cubits at the top beneath their capitals, and one hundred cubits in height.

Facing these pilasters, a distance from them sufficiently wide for three Egyptian fighting chariots to travel abreast, were double colonnades of great fluted columns, the inner ones monoliths and the outer ones in sections of the same height and thickness as the pilasters.

At the main entrance to the palace there stood upon each side of the broad stairway ten majestic elephants of heroic size, carved alternately from black and white marble.

The second landing of the great stairway, leading upward into the palace was guarded upon each side by carved lions of quadruple size of the largest found in Africa, fashioned alternately of red sandstone and burnished copper. The portals of the main entrance to the palace were flanked on each side by immense monoliths, carved to represent Isis

and Horus. In the center of the high arched entrance stood a carved image of Apis, the bull, four times the ordinary size. The effect of the sun falling upon this overwhelming arrangement of gigantic figures, many of them of burnished copper and some overlaid with pure gold, was of indescribable grandeur. Those who were permitted by the Pharaoh's guards to pass up this great stairway into his palace were so affected by the very majesty of the stairway and of the carven images which flanked it upon each side that their impression of this ruler, before they came into his presence was, that they were to see a person of supernatural power, whose authority was so great and strength so irresistible that no king nor nation upon the earth could make head against him.

Once inside the arched entrance to the palace, the structure and its appointments throughout were upon a still more magnificent scale. Fountains, some of them throwing perfumed sprays, rose to vast heights throughout the court; trees, flowers and birds of gorgeous plumage from every portion of the earth made of it a bower of such magnificence that it seemed beyond the capacity of human beings to design or equip it and put it into operation.

Guards and attendants were everywhere, both black and white. Black servants, gorgeously dressed in cloth of gold and wearing sandals of woven golden threads, carrying immense fans made of peacock and ostrich feathers of rainbow colors, followed or attended upon all persons of importance in or about the palace and all visitors who were admitted within its walls. Other servants, clad with equal gorgeousness, bore gold and silver chargers laden with the richest and choicest of viands, which they constantly offered to the guests and members of the king's household. Musicians clad in white embroidered togas, were grouped in appropriate places about the palace and its great court, and discoursed the semi-barbaric music of Egypt upon brazen, circular trumpets, copper drums, lyres, pipes and musical

instruments made of pieces of colored glass of different lengths and tints, which were struck with mallets.

Dancing-women of all shades, from the blackest Ethiopian to the whitest native of Lydia, were constanly dancing in different parts of the main court with and without the accompaniment of the musicians. These women, many of whom were Egyptians, were considered by the standards of the time to be the most beautiful of the women to be found of the various races represented in the Pharaoh's palace. Their costumes and dances were as different as races of human beings can be different. Some made their wonderful costumes their principal attraction, having folded and draped on and about them countless yards of beautiful cloths and gauzes of all tints and colors. Others made the very lack of clothing of any kind their principal charm to attract the attention of the persons of influence and power about the king's palace. There were tall and slender Egyptian women, swarthy of complexion and angular of figure, from the lower lands of Egypt; Egyptian women from the higher lands toward the great cataracts of the Nile, lighter of color and more beautiful of figure, but all of the same swarthy complexion, and black hair. From the Ethiopian tribes farther south were dancing women clad in the unique costumes of their country, their wrists and ankles ornamented with sharks' teeth, their teeth blackened, and great pieces of ivory thrust through the central portion of their nostrils, this being regarded by them and their people as a beautiful ornament.

Women from Babylonia, Assyria and Palestine, all in unique dress and giving the dances peculiar to their own country, were there. Yet others were there from farther north, from Phonecia, Lydia and Byzantium, and from the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea as far as the land of the Moors. Some rendered their dances with musical instruments of their own, some with circlets or hollow bells of brass containing tinkling balls of copper around their ankles, waists, necks and elbows, which they used to mark

the rhythm or time of their dances. There were women who danced upon elevated pedestals, upon tight ropes and in swings; yet others, entirely denuded of clothing, who gave strange water dances in the ponds and lakelets of the palace court, which were supplied with waters from the playing fountains; dancing women who danced upon the backs of artificial animals, such as giraffes and elephants made by combinations of black slaves grouped in the forms of those animals, and with beautiful and costly robes concealing them and giving the appearance of the animals which they represented; yet other women who danced upon the backs and about the bodies of real animals tamed and subjugated to their command, but which appeared startling in the court of the great palace,—lions, tigers, leopards, and birds, such as the ostrich and cassowary.

There were innumerable other things to interest, instruct and amuse the members of the king's household and guests who might be so favored as to be permitted access to the palace. The king's astrologers, who occupied certain of the great towers of the palace where they might make their observations of the heavens and forecast strange occurrences such as transits and eclipses of the heavenly bodies, also occupied positions of prominence in the great court. These astrologers were constantly consulted by the king and by the governor of the palace, by his generals and the princes of his house. The keepers of the records, who had other quarters in the palace, were also at times present in the great court, and might be consulted by the Pharaoh and his princes, and by the rulers of the palace under the Pharaoh, upon important matters of recorded history of Egypt; of the minimum and maximum annual rises of the Nile upon which the very life and prosperity of the kingdom depended; the alterations by accretion and erosion of the many mouths of the Nile; the genealogy of the rulers of the kingdom; the events in the changing idolatry or idol worship of this strange people.

The history of its ancient buildings, piles, monoliths and

other matters showing its relationship to the rest of the world were also within the scope of the keepers of the records. , Nor were the records themselves, as kept by these scriveners, without interest. The use of paper was twenty centuries in the future. Even vellum, or specially tanned leather, long employed for the making of books before paper came into use, was at this time but little used. The records, therefore, must be preserved in such manner and upon such materials as were known and used at that time. It may be said here that the records, as kept by these scriveners upon the materials at their command, were better and more permanent than any records made in the world today.

The records were of two kinds, papyrus and burned brick. Papyrus from which the word "paper" is taken, is the pith, or inside, of a species of reed which grows along the sedgy places on the edges of the river Nile and other rivers of the ancient world. The pith was sliced into flat pieces, laid transversely and pressed together. It made a flexible material upon which cuniform and other characters could be traced. It was extremely durable, so much so that in case the need for a certain record ceased to exist, the characters might be rubbed off with pumice and others traced on the roll of papyrus. The other form of records, namely the burned or sun dried brick, was very permanent. It was customary for cuniform and other characters to be traced upon the bricks while they were yet soft and thereafter for the bricks to be burned, hardening the characters and rendering them unchangeable, except by breakage; after which they were filed in the hall of records and would, if not broken, endure for all time. A singular method of making these records more permament was, at times, employed when they were deemed of especial importance. This custom was to trace the history upon a cylinder while the clay was soft, then burn the cylinder, hardening it and the characters thereon, after which it was covered with a coating of soft clay which made a complete jacket for the cylinder, then the whole was reburned. In this manner the record became

secret and could not be read until the jacket was broken off the outside, revealing the burned cylinder, so that its message could be easily read.

The religion of Shishak and his people was a curious combination of worship of spiritual beings supposed to inhabit the heavens and to guide and direct the minutest details of everyday life and the worship of bulls, lions, dogs and cats, and of animals of the lowest order, such as crocodiles and aligators. This strange and startling combination cannot easily be grasped by those accustomed to modern methods of thought. Isis, a goddess, and Horus, her son, were the imaginary deities of the Egyptians. Apis, the sacred bull, was the other extreme of their worship and was their most favored deity. The sacred bull was said to incarnate the spirit of Ptah, their most powerful god. Upon the death of the bull the spirit immediately passed into a living bull selected by the priesthood, and was their god henceforth.

The priesthood of Egypt were its political rulers under the Pharaoh who, himself, was the head of the priests of the kingdom. Through the priests all laws, orders and regulations for the government of the people were promulgated. The priesthood arrogated to itself then, as it has attempted to do in all ages of the world, power even over the military authorities and, as it would have been considered treason for any general or military commander to reject the religion of Isis, and of the sacred bull, it followed naturally that the priesthood, through whom the ruling Pharaoh made his commands and decrees known to the world, was above the military commanders.

At the time of which we write, this system of priestcraft with the ruling king as its head, its tentacles permeating every line of endeavor throughout the kingdom, had been enforced for a greater period of time than has passed since. It will readily be seen that a system of such great antiquity, woven into the very fiber of the minds of the people, could not be thrown off by any revolution, mental or physical, possible to a people of that character in that day.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Pharaoh's Dream of World Dominion

Heralds in gorgeous uniforms of black and gold, bearing long, straight trumpets of burnished brass moved about the court of Pharaoh, blew fanfares upon them and made proclamations in the name of the lord governor of the palace that an embassy from Assyria, an allied power of the Pharaoh, was approaching and must be received with the great honors due the powerful monarch which the embassy represented. The court of the mighty Pharaoh suddenly became all excitement. Military officers and commanders in gorgeous attire were marching and countermarching their troops, composed of soldiers recruited from races of every color. Detachments of Egyptian soldiers with black hair and swarthy features fell into line with companies of men-at-arms from Karchedon (later Carthage), followed by a corps of giants, all jet black, from the center of Ethiopia. There were troops who bore themselves proudly, showing their exclusiveness and contempt for soldiers of other races. These were partly from Iberia (Spain), Byzantium (Constantinople), and Lydia, accompanied by stalwart men-at-arms of pure white complexions, blue eyes and light hair, from Cappadocia and the region along the southern shores of the Black Sea, all the way to the Caucasian Mountains. Military musicians discoursed martial music. Their instruments were circular trumpets which wound twice over the right shoulder and under the left arm, and ended in an imitation of the mouth of a great serpent projecting forward over their heads; together with war drums; bugles made of ivory from elephants' tusks; bags made from the skins of

animals removed without breaking the skins, expanded with air and bearing small brass cymbals; pipes made of ebony, ringed with ivory and copper bands, blown very much as clarinets of the present day; other pipes of great length and large bore, which fitted over the mouths of the players and required great strength of lung and much practice to blow them; but in the hands of those capable of playing upon them the volume of sound they sent forth was exceedingly great.

The troops, heralds, musicians and dignitaries of the empire were mounted on camels, dromedaries and elephants, richly caparisoned and equipped with splendid furniture, robed with rich cloths of gold and silver threads, camel's hair and the weave of the silkworm and spider.

Heralds and messengers, mounted and on foot, were continually arriving at the palace, announcing the nearer and nearer approach of the great embassy and its enormous retinue. At last, with a blare of trumpets, the advance guard of the embassy swung into view. The retinue, attending the ambassador or royal envoy appeared more like a conquering army than a military escort. The first line of guards was composed of spearmen in full armor, bearing long shields in front of them. These were followed by crossbowmen with their oddly-shaped helmets and distinctive garb of chain mail. After these came the cuirassiers and then a detachment of horse followed by archers mounted on dromedaries, two archers to each dromedary. After these came long lines of elephants with military howdahs upon their backs. In these military howdahs were four men-at-arms, two spearsmen and two crossbowmen. Behind the elephants marched a detachment of spearsmen forming a great circle, each armed with a circular shield made of rawhide covered with copper bosses, each man uniformed in flaming scarlet, trimmed with bands of gold braid. These men-at-arms were the personal guards of the ambassador or royal envoy, who rode in the middle of the circle, mounted upon a gigantic white elephant cov-

ered with trappings of gold and scarlet. These were followed by detachments of men-at-arms, both foot and horse.

The great caravan deployed in front of the outer wall of the palace of Shishak. The circle of personal guards in scarlet uniform opened upon the side toward the palace gate, the white elephant slowly kneeled and the ambassador, accompanied by military officers and personal attendants, advanced on foot between two long lines of guards toward the gateway of the great wall. As he arrived at the outer portal of the gateway the governor-general of the palace, with other military officers under his command, received the envoy with high honors and escorted him and his attendants through the vaulted gateway and into the palace. Once inside the great court, the envoy and the governor, arm in arm, followed by the military dignitaries of both nations, passed between long lines of men-at-arms who saluted and brought their spears, swords and other arms to "present" as the party passed them. Finally, the ambassador was escorted by the governor into the lofty audience chamber and received by the Pharaoh, seated upon his inlaid ivory throne.

The envoy knelt at the foot of the broad circular stairway leading up to the throne and saluted Egypt's monarch. Shishak then arose and, advancing a few steps, caused the envoy to be escorted to a seat beside him. Thereafter, the guards and others withdrew beyond earshot and a long consultation was held between the Pharaoh and the envoy, the Prince Akirop being present and participating in the conference. In the course of this conversation the plans for the massing of the arms of Egypt and of Assyria along the eastern or left bank of the river Jordan were thoroughly discussed. A fair understanding of the plans had already been reached by means of ordinary messengers bearing scrolls exchanged between the two monarchs, but this was the first time, since the plans had begun to develop, that so important a conference had been held, so there was

a great deal for the envoy, the Pharaoh, and his son the prince, to discuss and digest.

The Jordan's surging waters fall into the bitter brine of the Dead Sea but a short distance south of Jerusalem. If the Egyptian forces attempted to cross to the east banks of the Jordan by passing between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea, then the plans of the Pharaoh would be discovered by the Hebrews before the armies were in position to begin the attack. Nor was there any way for the armies of the Pharaoh to join the Assyrian armies on the eastern side of the Jordan, except to leave Egypt and travel southward and eastward around the southern shores of the Dead Sea and then northward until they formed a junction with the Assyrian forces. This route was considerably longer than the other and, what was worse, it was over a desert so forbidding and void of vegetation and water other than the poison brine of the Dead Sea and its arms and tributaries, that there would be great difficulty attendant upon this journey. The situation was debated seriously. It appeared that if the Egyptian forces attempted to attack Jerusalem from the south or west, their movements would become known in ample time for the forces of the King of Tyre to join King Solomon and set up a line of defense against the Egyptians before they could effect a junction with Ben Haddad's forces, and even before their own lines could be formed. In that event the victory of the Egyptians over Solomon and his allies might be doubtful. It was absolutely necessary, they decided, to move quickly and without permitting King Solomon to learn the strength of their armies or their purposes, if he did not already know them.

It was deemed best for the Egyptian forces to start upon the following dawn to move around the southern shores of the Dead Sea and then northward until they joined the Assyrians and were prepared to cross the river Jordan from the east, and overrun Palestine. It was hoped in this way that King Solomon might not learn of the magnitude of the attack in time to communicate with the King of Tyre and

have forces sent to his aid to prevent the capture of his capital and the annihilation of his armies.

This point being definitely decided, orders were dispatched at once by the governor-general of the palace to the military commanders to march upon the following dawn along the route decided upon.

These matters having been settled, the question of the military relationship between the King of Assyria and the Pharaoh of Egypt came uppermost. The Pharaoh, a man of years and discretion and of great self-control, became so intoxicated with his plans that gradually it became apparent to the Assyrian envoy that the Egyptian monarch had determined to play first part in all of these great military movements. The command of the situation seemed to Pharaoh to belong to him. It was he who had first originated the design to take Palestine and capture the treasure of David. He had readily joined in the plan of having his daughter become the official queen of King Solomon, that she might be able to procure for him the very secrets of the Temple and the hiding place of the treasure of David and the military strength of the King of Palestine, so that everything would be known to the Pharaoh, as conqueror. Moreover, he had despatched his three sons, princes of Egypt, to Jerusalem and they had, through the power of Solomon's queen, been advanced to high places in the work of the Temple and in the offices of the Great Fraternity which enrolled all of the Temple builders in its membership.

These princes, for the sake of accomplishing the purposes and plans of their mighty father, had occupied, temporarily, all manner of positions from that of beadsman, or professional beggar, to that of Past Master or Prince in the Fraternity of builders. These sons had, in this manner, acquired all of the military secrets of the King of Israel. They knew of all the walls and the gates which protected Jerusalem; of the water supply and its sources; of the secret passageway under the wall near the Damascus gate, to the royal quarries; and the lay of the country round about

Jerusalem. Arguing from all of these great advantages acquired by him, the Pharaoh claimed that his was the guiding hand which had shaped the invasion of Palestine, and his was the mind which should lead the attack, and he, after the victory, should distribute the spoils.

The royal envoy from Assyria was an astute man of Oriental mind, who understood Orientals. Long before the conference was at an end it had become clear to him that the Pharaoh of Egypt was using the league which had been made between Egypt and Assyria for his own personal aggrandizement. It was equally clear to this swarthy Oriental that the victory, having once been accomplished and Palestine having been subjugated by the invading armies, it was the intention of Shishak then to turn upon his allies, the Assyrians, and conquer and subject that nation to his power, overrunning their kingdom and thereafter dominating the civilized world. Having reached this conclusion, the rest of the conference between the royal envoy and the mighty Pharaoh was merely a game of wits. The envoy appeared to concede the strength of Pharaoh's position in the military world. He led the Pharaoh with adroit questioning, under the influence of rare wine which had been flowing during the conference, until he had obtained all the information he desired.

Thereafter the conference, apparently completed, came to an end. The envoy was assigned magnificent quarters in the Pharaoh's palace, and took his leave of the Pharaoh, explaining that long before the sun had risen the following morning, he would be on his way back to his royal master who had sent him.

As the envoy retired for the night he murmured softly to himself:

"The light of the sun falls on Assyria before Egypt."

CHAPTER XV.

The Wayfaring Man Escapes from Palestine

This narrative must now return to Baana and his friend, Abdamon. When they had been delivered into the custody of the prison guards, with instructions from Achizar to confine them in certain dungeons of the Temple, they were kept manacled to each other and led through various corridors and passageways to the dungeons, and were finally taken through a door of solid stone, protected by massive bolts and bars on the outside. Once inside this heavily barricaded cell, the guards left them without a word, closed and secured the door and disappeared.

Abdamon, who had cruised the Mediterranean for years and faced death a score of times in out-of-the-way places under every circumstance, was not greatly affected by this situation. Their case appeared hopeless, but he had been in equally hopeless situations many times before and, besides, life was held cheaply in those days. The whim of a monarch, or even of a petty officer, meant death for him who had incurred such displeasure. Having been taught to look death in the face, Abdamon was not disconcerted now that he had been ordered to his death by Solomon, while in reality risking his life for the Temple, the treasure and the king.

He noticed, however, that Baana, who was younger, and with less worldly experience in matters of so evil a nature as their present case, seemed not to be cast down, so Abdamon addressed him, saying:

"Baana, thou seemest not over-sorrowful at our evil situation. Hast thou some hope of escape from this dungeon with walls thick enough to hold an army?"

Baana groped in the gloom of the cell for Abdamon's hand and having reached it, bent over and whispered in Abdamon's ear:

"Keep silent thy tongue and let us communicate with each other by clasping hands or in a low whisper. The walls of these dungeons have hearing tubes that lead to those who desire our death."

Baana placed Abdamon's hand in his bosom beneath his gaberdine, upon a piece of metal, shaped in the form of a dungeon-key of that period. Abdamon now understood that one of the guards, who had conducted them into the dungeon upon instructions from Achizar, had given Baana a key with which they might open a way out and make their escape.

The two friends sat on a stone bench and remained silent for a long time, for the purpose of wearing out anyone who might be listening at the tubes beyond the walls. When they felt sure that there was nothing to fear in this direction Baana, by the aid of a small horn lamp which had also been given them by the guards, began stealthily to search for the outlet from the dungeon which, when found, could be unlocked by the large copper key.

The light of the tiny lamp was dim and the search lasted long. Finally, in an angle made by the projection from the stone wall of a supporting buttress, they found an aperture which would receive the great copper key. Being inserted, it could be turned only with the utmost difficulty; but when turned, the great stone buttress, which was on a pivot above and below, moved outward and sideways from the wall and disclosed a doorway opening upon a flight of solid stone stairs down which Baana and Abdamon passed, after carefully closing the door behind them.

This stairway led to a chamber beneath the dungeon in which they had been confined. This lower chamber appeared simply to be an enlargement of a corridor which ex-

tended out of it each way. Baana, seeming to have a full knowledge of this corridor, moved forward with as much speed as the light from his little lamp would permit, and Abdamon kept pace with him.

Following this corridor, they passed innumerable doorways and entrances to other subterranean chambers, at last coming to a stairway which also seemed familiar to Baana. Up this they moved rapidly and soon found themselves at its top, edged around by a solid stone wall. Abdamon thought they had run into a pocket, but Baana's superior knowledge of the locality availed them well again. He fitted the same copper key into a great keyhole in the solid stone and the key, being turned with much labor, one side of the small stone chamber opened outward, and through this opening much better light than any they had yet enjoyed fell upon them. Baana and Abdamon stepped through the opening. When outside, they swung the great stone slab back into place where it locked with a muffled report.

Instantly, Abdamon realized where he had been brought by his friend. They were now in the stone chamber which had been occupied by himself and Baana for many months as their sleeping place.

Here the two friends held a hurried council. It was plain that they were now in an evil way. King Solomon had issued orders for their execution, which would pass from officer to officer until they were known to every one connected with the work upon the great Temple, and they would lose their lives at once if they came in contact with any of the king's guards or military officers or with any of the princes, provosts, overseers or masters of the work. With the death sentence over them, their lives would be endangered if they were even seen by any of the great army of Temple workmen.

Upon the other hand, if their whereabouts became known to Metusael, Fanor or any of their confederates, they would be put to death because of their loyalty to King Solomon. It was clear that thenceforward they must avoid the eyes

of every man, as no matter whether they were the forces of King Solomon, his allies or enemies, every man's hand would be turned against them.

But one course remained; they must quickly reach the seacoast three hundred furlongs distant, avoiding recognition and, having once arrived there, take any ship available and put as much of the Great Sea between themselves and Palestine as possible.

Baana and Abdamon had become cautious and suspicious in the last few months of their services upon the Temple. They had at all times kept a quantity of portable food concealed in a hollow cut by them in the stone wall of their sleeping chamber, together with some leathern bottles of wine. Abdamon had procured and concealed in their stone chamber two suits of sailors' clothing, which he now brought forth with two excellent broadswords.

Baana and Abdamon quickly changed their garb from Temple workers to that of the sea. The food supplies and bottles of wine they slung over their shoulders, and Abdamon fastened a heavy belt about his waist, to which was attached a large scabbard. In this he placed one broadsword and offered the other to Baana who declined it, saying that he had become proficient with his strange weapon, the tempered copper chisel, and that he could keep it concealed about his clothing better than the broadsword, and felt safer in its use. By means of the passage to the outside world from their sleeping chamber, they now worked their way out of the royal quarries. The night was still, the sky was cloudless, brilliant with a golden moon overhead and unnumbered twinkling stars. Being now quite familiar with the country surrounding Jerusalem, the two friends started off rapidly toward the seacoast, but kept at a considerable distance from the main highway running from Jerusalem to Joppa.

They traveled with the utmost caution to prevent being discovered by anyone, as it seemed now that all persons were their enemies.

By the time day had broken they were nearly half way to the coast, but extremely tired and hungry and fearful of daylight. They sought concealment at a distance from the main highway in an ancient tomb which was almost a small building, being constructed according to the custom of that country, in the form of a miniature church with one door leading to the interior and two tiny windows in the gables at each end. Once inside of this tomb, they rolled stones against the door until it was fairly solid and immovable from the outside. They ate a portion of their food and drank some of the wine which they had brought with them and made themselves as comfortable as possible on the cobblestone floor, for they must have sleep and rest. They slept spasmodically, constantly fearing capture, and tortured by the roughness of their beds. They remained until night in the tomb and, still having food and drink, recuperated their strength somewhat.

When night had fallen, they resumed their journey, believing that they would be safer by traveling only at night. They arrived at the ancient town of Joppa, the seaport for the city of Jerusalem, before daylight on the second day. Here Abdamon became the leader, as he was familiar with shipping, whereas Baana was familiar only with the wady from which he hailed, and the city of Jerusalem and its immediate vicinity, to which might be added the knowledge he had acquired of the country on his trip with Abdamon to Tyre.

Joppa is not a harbor, but has only what is designated by seafaring folk as a roadstead, which means simply a place near a coast deep enough to keep vessels from striking reefs or rocks, and shallow enough for them to find a good anchorhold. Such a place, of course, has no protection against storms or heavy winds for the vessels anchored there, and if the shipping is menaced in that way, the only course possible is to weigh anchor, put out to sea and ride out the storm.

By the dim light of the early morning Abdamon's practiced eye quickly surveyed all of the shipping in the road-

stead. After his examination he said to Baana that there was anchored in the roadstead an Egyptian galleon which displayed a flag indicating that the captain was in need of sailors. He said further that they would board the galleon and offer themselves as soon as the day had fairly dawned. Baana objected to boarding an Egyptian craft. Abdamon's answer was that they would assuredly be captured if they remained in Joppa or its vicinity throughout the day; that their chances of escape would be better on board the Egyptian galleon that if they remained longer on the seacoast. He called Baana's attention to the fact that they had lost all of the previous day, concealed in the ancient tomb; that the king's messengers had doubtless already reached Joppa and the military authorities and guards would be watching for them at that point. He pointed out further that, owing to the fact of their being in disfavor with the Egyptian authorities, the most unlikely place where search would be made for them would be on an Egyptian ship. Beyond that, the galleon would in no event be boarded by officers of the King of Palestine if it was ready to clear from port, which was undoubtedly the case, as the hoisted flag indicated.

Without risking their capture by waiting for day to break, they took possession of a small boat lying upon the beach and put out to sea, approaching the galleon from the side of the open ocean, that they might be concealed by the ship's hull from those, upon the shore side, interested in capturing them. After they had rowed around the galleon to approach it from the offing, they moved slowly and silently until they had touched the ship. Abdamon, bidding Baana remain in the boat and keep it next to the galleon, easily lifted himself over the ship's gunwale and disappeared from sight. He went forward and sat on a coil of cordage, intending to wait until the captain, or someone, should appear. After a short time a sailor, evidently standing watch, passed near. Abdamon saluted the watch and, pointing to the flag hanging from the rigging, said that he and his com-

panion wished to take service as sailors upon the ship. This conversation was started in the Egyptian tongue, as the sailor on watch was clearly an Egyptian. The watch said that he would report to the captain immediately, as three more men were desired to complete his crew; but he had said the evening before that the necessity for haste was so great that he would sail even if he could not get them. Shortly, the Egyptian captain appeared on deck and signaled Abdamon to approach. The captain addressed him in Egyptian, asking what his experience was as a sailor. To this Abdamon replied that he had sailed the seas of all the world for twenty years and was familiar with all manner of shipping and with almost every language spoken along the shores of the Mediterranean. Being asked what knowledge his companion had, Abdamon, for the sake of pulling his friend through and out of danger, magnified his knowledge of the sea sufficiently to obtain the captain's consent to his employment, intending to watch Baana carefully and perform his work where necessary, knowing that Baana would with rapidity acquire sufficient knowledge to fill a minor place.

They were both shipped at once by the captain. At Abdamon's request, the little boat in which he and Baana had reached the ship was towed back to shore by a sailor in one of the ship's boats. The little boat was returned for two reasons; first, Baana and Abdamon had no desire to deprive its owner of his means of subsistence, which it no doubt afforded him; second, a theft of the boat would indicate to the military officers at Joppa the direction in which Baana and Abdamon had gone, and this information must be kept from them if possible.

The Egyptian galleon was a vessel of great beauty, and Abdamon said it was a royal ship. Its sails were made of heavy cloth specially woven of brilliant red, with serrated borders of jet black. The appointments of the ship were rich and beautiful. It immediately weighed anchor and put out to sea. It was moved both by sails and rowers, according to custom at that time. The galleon was of considerable

size. It had a full bank of rowers upon each side, numbering one hundred and twenty in all. These rowers were slaves from almost every nation of the earth. The prevailing nationality, however, was Berber, giant blacks from Abyssinia, over which country the Pharaoh of Egypt at that time held sway. The rowers were ranged in banks along the sides of the ship from bow to stern. The movement of the rowers was as one person. They all, at the same instant, bore down upon the handles of their oars and took two steps backward which elevated the blades of the oars on the outside of the ship above the water and moved them forward. Then the rowers simultaneously dropped the blades into the water and, throwing all their power against the handles of the oars, took two steps forward. This movement, made by twenty oars on each side of the ship, forty in all, with three men to each oar, drove the ship rapidly through the water. When winds were favorable the sails also greatly augmented the power of the rowers, and a boat driven in this manner could make considerable speed.

All of this was new and strange to Baana. As soon as Abdamon could do so, he took him through the boat and explained its management and equipment. One of Baana's first questions was as to the meaning of the chains which were bolted solidly to the ship near each rower's place and which upon the ends carried massive copper anklets in a position to be clasped and locked around the ankles of the rowers, and could only be unlocked by someone having the keys. Abdamon explained that although this particular ship was not a fighting ship, but was a royal galleon belonging personally to the Pharaoh, yet the danger of pirates at that time was constant and even a merchant vessel must carry in the complement of its crew certain fighting men for the purpose of repelling the attacks of pirates. When it became apparent that an attack was about to be made, the captain of the rowers chained their ankles so that they could not leave their positions, because, in case of attack

the rowers themselves, being slaves, might mutiny and so make certain the loss of the ship, the captain and cargo.

Another feature in this connection was pointed out by Abdamon. There was a high platform in the hold of the ship near the bow, upon which sat the captain of the rowers. He had in front of him a great drum with but one head, made of several thicknesses of the strongest rawhide. He had in his hands a great wooden maul with which he struck upon the mighty drum and, from long practice, had acquired the art of beating the drum as evenly and steadily as could have been done by a machine. These drum-beats were the signal for each of the one hundred and twenty oarsmen to drop their oars into the water and, applying all of their force to it, step forward two steps.

Alongside the captain of the rowers sat a lesser official with a crossbow at hand ready, at the direction of the drummer, to snap out the life of any rower who might attempt mutiny or neglect the commands of the big drum.

Baana was struck with the terrible brutality of chaining the rowers to the ship in time of danger when it might be sunk, sending them all to certain death. Abdamon explained that the rowers themselves were, for the most part, bloodthirsty murderers who, at the slightest opportunity, would not hesitate to kill the captain and his crew, or scuttle the ship on the chance of getting to shore upon some floating spars or wreckage from the ship and that the practice of chaining them to the ship in times of danger had been found, by long experience, to be necessary.

Abdamon, from his thorough mastery of the sea, was quickly made a petty officer by the captain of the galleon. Baana had the good fortune to come under the captain's personal observation, and although he had only begun to acquire a few words of Egyptian, yet the shrewd and experienced captain saw in him a man of native ability, who could easily fit himself for any position in which he might be placed.

The position of captain of the rowers (corresponding with the Roman hortator) was a difficult one to fill. The navigating officer above decks constantly passed word to him as to the speed which should be made by the ship and through the medium of the drum he could put on all the power of the one hundred and twenty rowers or could moderate it to the slightest movement through the water. The steadiness of the work, however, was extremely trying and could not be carried on by one person for any great length of time. One of the men needed by the ship's captain upon leaving the roadstead at Joppa was an assistant to the captain of the rowers to relieve him for rest, to keep himself fit for the driving forward of this important part of the ship's machinery. To Baana was assigned this work, and at the end of the first few days he was declared entirely fitted to relieve the captain of the rowers at any time.

Baana was greatly interested in the ship, which was strikingly beutiful. Abdamon had ascertained the character of the royal galleon and the nature of its voyage. He explained to Baana that it belonged to Shishak, the mighty Pharaoh of Egypt, and that its particular mission was the transportation of treasure, precious weaves and fabrics, hammered gold, silver, brass and copper vessels and other ornaments for the king's palace and for the places of worship in the principal cities of the kingdom, and for the transportation of the most beautiful women of the various nations of the world, either obtained by purchase or capture and taken to Memphis, the capitol of Egypt, for the especial pleasure of the Pharaoh and his favorites, as wives, concubines and dancing women. This royal galleon had been as far west as Iberia for women of dark hair and eyes, and as far northeast as Cappadocia on the Black Sea for Caucasian women with dazzling white complexions and golden hair. The Iberian women were said by some, and the Cappadocians by others, to be the most beautiful women in the world. It had touched at other points, notably the seacoast of Lydia, the great island of Kittim, and the cities of Sidon and Tyre.

It was heavily laden with a wealth of manufactured gold, silver, coral, emeralds, rubies and other precious stones from Tyre; with the fir and the cedar of Lebanon, from the Phoenician coast; with thrones of pure ivory inlaid in boxwood, from the isles of Kittim; with beautiful broidered work and brocades of blue and purple from the isles of Elishan; with honey, oil and balm, with wine, spices, wools and yarns from Damascus, Tadmor, and from the lands beyond the Euphrates. It was a treasure ship laden with vast wealth of every kind. There were on board the ship a considerable number of armed men, as guards, skilled in sea fighting, and it appeared that one brush with pirates already had taken place, in which the attacking party had been defeated and most of them slain, but the crew of the galleon had also been reduced by the loss of men, a few being killed in the combat. For this reason the captain had put into the roadstead at Joppa and displayed his flag, inviting seamen aboard. It was learned that he had shipped several seamen at Joppa before Baana and Abdamon had been engaged.

As this was Baana's first experience upon the sea, it was of boundless interest to him. Abdamon did not allow the great danger to Baana and himself to be dimmed by the grandeur of the ship. He knew, and frequently said to Baana, that they had left a country in which they would be put to death if discovered, and were journeying to another country to meet the same fate there unless, perchance, they could conceal their identity.

They soon learned that the royal galleon was bound for Memphis; but Abdamon was puzzled as to the immediate destination of the ship. Its natural course from Joppa to the nearest navigable mouth of the Nile was almost due southwest, and yet the officer at the helm held the ship almost westerly. If the direct course to the Nile and Memphis had been maintained the voyage would have been completed in a few days, as the distance was only three thousand to four thousand furlongs; but under the course followed

by the navigating officer a much longer time would be taken to complete the voyage.

The appointments of the ship exceeded in beauty anything of which Baana ever had conceived. Even Abdamon expressed his astonishment at the display of wealth about the ship. As a petty officer he readily had access to the greater portion of the ship, and Baana, when resting from his work as assistant captain of the rowers, could accompany Abdamon about the ship and study its construction and operation.

The captain of the ship was a high Egyptian officer closely connected with the palace of Shishak. He was not at all on the order of the average ship captain of a merchant vessel, but appeared to be a man of striking appearance and ability, gorgeously dressed in a uniform which was a combination of that of a ship captain of a royal galleon and a high officer of the king's court. While the will of an ordinary ship captain is, broadly speaking, supreme law on board ship when at sea, the power of this captain was even greater, and the respect, amounting almost to adulation, in which he was held by his officers and men, indicated to Abdamon and Baana that when he was in Memphis, as well as upon the deck of his galleon, his authority under Pharaoh was extensive.

Abdamon, at the close of the second day, told Baana that the ship's course, instead of lying toward Egypt, appeared to bear toward the great island of Crete, distant from Joppa at least twice as far as Memphis.

At the close of another day, Abdamon, in conversation with Baana, declared that he was convinced the galleon was bound for Crete, and he expressed surprise at this, because the King of Crete was a powerful monarch and unfriendly to Shishak, the ruler of Egypt. Abdamon explained to Baana that the island of Crete was more than twelve hundred furlongs in length and very wide and thickly settled; that the country had, for more than a thousand years, shown a very high stage of development; that its people were highly

skilled in arts and sciences, but had acquired a special knowledge in certain lines, particularly in pottery of the highest grade and most beautiful ornamentation, and in the manufacture of effective and beautiful inlaid gold weapons, such as swords, spears, shields and other instruments of warfare. Abdamon explained further that the kingdom of Crete, through a long course of development and trading with the other nations of the world, had acquired great wealth and that its argosies and galleons and its war galleys covered all the waters of the earth. He said that its women were of the Caucasian race and esteemed as being among the most beautiful women of the earth. He said that if the Egyptian galleon went so far as Crete, and particularly to the great city of Gnossus, its capital, that the galleon, unless protected in some manner, would be captured by the fighting galleys of the King of Crete, and that unless their Egyptian galleon deflected from its present course, they might expect a combat at sea, from which the Egyptian galleon could not possibly emerge the victor.

The beautiful galleon of Egypt, however, continued upon the same westerly course day after day, until the belief of Abdamon became a firm conviction, and he said to Baana that, undoubtedly, they were to touch at Gnossus on the northern shore of Crete.

Baana had now become quite familiar with his duty in working the ship through the rowers. He was interested in his work, although it became at times very tiresome. The monotony of swinging the great maul upon the mighty drum uniformly and without the slightest change in rythm or volume of sound, became wearisome. The hull of the ship, where he sat, was so arranged that he could see each of the forty rowers and watch their work.

Being of an active mind and anxious to acquire knowledge which might help him in his work after he had become settled and familiar with the work of directing the movements of the rowers, he turned his attention to each individual rower. For the most part they were uninteresting.

The greater number of them were stolid Berbers from Abyssinia, of gigantic stature and jet black skin. The Berbers appeared to be and to move as mere machines. They were large and heavy, and as they threw their weight against the ends of the oars and took their two steps forward, they appeared to have no more interest in their work than a bullock; but because of their great weight applied to the oars the galleon rushed forward rapidly through the sea, piling up a fountain of foam under its bow. Besides the black Berbers, there were rowers of all colors and complexions. Some appeared to be from Byzantium and some from the desert tribes. The Byzantines bent to their work apparently with interest and even intelligence. The high-strung men from the desert chafed and, as Baana surmised, quickly wore out with the steady grind to which they were subjected.

In a little while Baana felt that he had examined every oarsman and assessed his value in the combined motive power of the ship. His interest was aroused by one particular rower, who appeared to be of a different race from any of the others and who seemed to possess an intelligence above his fellows. This slave of the ship was tall and well-built. His hair, eyebrows and eyelashes were dark brown and his beard, which was unshaven, was of the same color, but was not at all like the beards of Oriental peoples. His eyes were blue and his head indicated a high order of intelligence. Baana noticed, with interest, that this stalwart young man evidently had studied his work, and that instead of applying his force to his oar and moving it by mere brute strength, he had acquired the knack of pushing the handle of the oar forward by a movement which required less strength and was yet more effective than the dogged manner in which the others operated their oars. Baana noticed also that this powerfully-built young man had determined to preserve his strength and keep it equally distributed among the different muscles of his body, doubtless in the hope that he might sometime escape the galleon and be

free again and, when this was accomplished, he would be in shape to make the best of his freedom. Baana noticed he constantly shifted his position, so as to bring different muscles into play from time to time and besides that, he would push the oar ahead of him the same as the other rowers did for a short space, and afterwards would swiftly change his position so that he stood in advance of the great handle of his oar and pulled it toward him at the time when others were pushing their oars ahead of them. There was room for study and conjecture in regard to this particular galley slave. Baana's interest in him grew constantly. He mentioned him to Abdamon and the latter, after studying the rower for a time, said to Baana that, undoubtedly, he was a high officer of some army or navy, or someone connected with the court of a king, who had been captured in battle and made a galley slave. Baana questioned Abdamon as to the propriety of talking with the oarsman to learn his story. Abdamon said that if this was done it must be with much caution as, if Baana were seen talking with one of the galley slaves, it might create suspicion. It was, therefore, arranged that when the rowers changed shifts, Baana and Abdamon would go to the quarters of those who were off duty, upon an inspection trip to the quarters,—a duty which devolved upon the captain of the rowers and, of course, upon Baana as well, in his capacity as assistant to the captain. To avoid suspicion, they made show of inspecting the quarters of all the rowers and attempted to talk with some of them. They were stolid and sullen, however, for the most part and refused to talk. The history of the galley slaves of that time shows that they could follow the unspeakable drudgery of rowing the galleys for only a few years—two or three at most—with unimpaired mental and physical faculties, and thereafter their mentality, from lack of use and because of the frightful drudgery, began to weaken and their memory of everything which had come into their lives began to fade and in a year or two more they were no better than stolid oxen, and from this time on their physical con-

dition steadily deteriorated until they were useless, as rowers. Some of the oarsmen, however, had not reached that stage and conversed with Baana and Abdamon more or less freely.

The stalwart young man in whom they were particularly interested spoke many languages and showed, at once, high education. Abdamon, who had a fair command of many tongues, first addressed him in Egyptian. The rower readily replied in that tongue and upon being asked who he was, and where he was from, stated with frankness that his name was Minos, and that he was a direct descendant of the great king of Crete of that name and that he, himself, was, at that moment, entitled to the throne of Crete; but, upon the death of his father, the king, the throne had been seized by his uncle and that he, himself, with the utmost difficulty, escaped with his life from the island.

In making his escape he had clothed himself as a fisherman and put to sea in an open boat. While at sea he had been picked up by an Egyptian war-galley and had been treated with marked courtesy by the captain until their arrival at Memphis. Certain nobles of the court of Shishak heard of the rescue of young Minos and that he was in Memphis. Through some arrangement with the usurping king of Crete, he was seized and made a galley slave on board one of the war galleys of Pharaoh. From that galley he had been shifted to the present royal galleon, because the rowers upon the royal galleon must be the pick of the galley slaves upon all the ships of Pharaoh.

Baana and Abdamon were greatly interested in Minos's story. Abdamon explained to him that they appeared at this time to be bound for Crete. This information produced great astonishment in the mind of young Minos because, he said, there had been a falling-out between his uncle and Shishak, and they were now bitter enemies. He continued further that, if the royal galleon reached Crete, it would be seized by the forces under his uncle, the usurping king and all of its wealth and its beautiful women would be retained in

Crete, and the galleon itself would be taken by the usurping king for his own use, unless some arrangement had been made for its protection against capture. Young Minos at this time, preferred a rather startling request to Baana. As before stated, when a ship manned with galley slaves went into a naval combat, the ankles of the rowers were manacled and locked, so that the rowers were chained to the ship and could not leave their positions. Minos said to Baana that it would, of course, be his duty as assistant to the captain of the rowers to manacle the ankles of the oarsman if a naval combat appeared to be imminent. He asked Baana to leave him unmanacled so that, if the ship sank, he might have a chance to save his life upon floating wreckage. He promised further that he would not take advantage of this favor if Baana would grant it, and would remain at his post, handling his oar as long as there was any possible hope of the ship remaining afloat. Baana readily granted this request, but cautioned him to do no talking to any of the other oarsmen or to anyone at all about this promise, because if it reached any of the higher officers of the ship, Baana would be removed from the place where he could be of assistance to Minos. The conversation between the three went on until they became interested in each other, and Baana and Abdamon sought an opportunity upon the following day to continue their acquaintance and friendship with young Minos. This meeting and exchange of experiences between the three men continued until they became firm friends.

The voyage continued upon placid seas until Abdamon estimated that the island of Crete should begin to show as a blue cloud upon the distant horizon to the west. At this time Baana was seated on the bench of the captain of the rowers, wielding the great maul upon the drum which controlled the movements of the oarsmen. The progress of the ship since leaving the roadstead at Joppa had been uniform as to speed, and scarcely any commands had been given to the captain of the rowers or to Baana by the officers above, who were navigating the ship.

Now, all was changed in an instant. The officer of the deck called down through the speaking tube to Baana to slow down the rowers to barely sufficient movement in the water to give steering way for the ship. This command was quickly transmitted by means of the maul and drum, and the rowers all slacked their efforts to a bare movement of the oars, to give the ship steering way. Abdamon tumbled down through a stairway into the forward hold of the ship and, approaching Baana, whispered to him that a flotilla of Egyptian war galleys was in sight, evidently according to a prearranged plan and that the royal galleon was waiting for them to come up and join her. Abdamon whispered further to Baana that it was now certain an attack was to be made upon the island of Crete, perhaps against its capital city, Gnossus, and that there was sea fighting immediately ahead. He said that the population of Crete was highly developed, largely maritime and through a long succession of centuries had produced great sea fighters and that Baana and himself would likely be involved in one of the most sanguinary naval battles of the time.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Sea Battle for the Kingdom of Crete

The eastern end of the great island of Crete was now in plain view from the port-holes of the royal galleon. The distance from this end of the island to its capital city, on the northern coast, was about seven hundred and fifty furlongs. Abdamon, Baana and Minos held a secret conference in one of the small enclosed bunk-rooms in the bow of the royal galleon as to the probable place along the coast of Crete where the naval battle was likely to take place. Abdamon, because of his experience at sea, had a general knowledge of the shores of the great island. Minos, who had been early taught by his father, the King of Crete, that he must fit himself for the kingdom by acquiring first-hand information, in detail, of every portion of the island, was entirely familiar with its coast line. There is an immense bay on the northern coast of Crete near its eastern end, and Minos and Abdamon were united in their opinion that the Egyptian fleet, when it reached the island, would hug the northern shore and sail into this bay, probably remaining there until nightfall. Thereafter they would come out under cover of darkness and sail westward until close enough to strike the capital city and there make their attack. Minos, Baana and Abdamon planned that if this were done, and the Egyptian fleet came to anchor in this great bay, Minos should be permitted to leave the galleon silently at night and swim to the shore. He explained that once upon the land he could readily obtain from the first inhabitants whom he met who might possess horses, the swiftest animals at their command, and he would in that way be enabled to make the capital of Crete before the fighting ships could possibly reach there. Once at the capital, before the usurping king,

his uncle, could learn of his presence, he felt sure he could make himself known to the admirals, generals and captains of the naval and land forces, that they would at once abandon the usurping king and rally to him and to the defense of Crete, and its seacoast, from the invaders. This seemed an excellent plan and was readily adopted by the three friends.

By this time the Egyptian fleet had surrounded the royal galleon and, in honor of it, had saluted by lowering and raising their colors. One of the Egyptian ships, which appeared to be the war galley of the admiral of the fleet, had hauled alongside the royal galleon and an important Egyptian officer had boarded the galleon and was now in consultation with its captain. Soon the navigating officer of the royal galleon called down the speaking tube to Baana, who had returned to his place, to put the galleon full speed ahead. From that time on the entire flotilla of war galleys with the royal galleon in the centre of their formation sailed in military order directly for the northeast coast of Crete.

Abdamon, who was now on deck, was constantly on the lookout for Cretan ships, or shipping of any character, which might convey the information of the approach of a hostile fleet to the Cretan capital, still a long distance off on the northern shore. But he did not see any shipping and was surprised at its absence. In the course of all of his preceding voyages there had been more or less coastwise shipping along all of the coast. The great island was thickly settled throughout its entire area, and its inhabitants were, for the most part, highly educated, skilled in navigating the sea, and in manufacturing, and were a prosperous and happy people, constantly interchanging traffic with each other by coasting vessels.

As the day wore on, the Egyptian fleet finally rounded the northeast cape of Crete and still pursued its course westward. At this point Minos and Abdamon had expected that the fleet would deflect southwesterly for the purpose of entering the great bay and, perhaps, remain there until nightfall, but this was not done. The fleet in time passed the opening

of the bay and rounded its northwest head and then followed along the north coast apparently directly headed for Gnossus, the Cretan capital. Minos and Abdamon were greatly surprised at this movement and at the failure of their plans. It seemed that the Egyptian fleet was so confident of victory that its commander was willing to give battle to the sea forces of Crete near their own base, in broad daylight. It could scarcely be possible that the Egyptians would reach the seacoast at Gnossus without signals being given to the Cretan warships that they were coming. Minos, who was thoroughly familiar with the plans constantly employed by the Cretan authorities to protect their rich island and wealthy capital from naval attacks, said that no hostile fleet, such as that of the Egyptians could approach the city without warning being given to its defenders. Another cause for wonderment was the fact that Egypt was not a strong sea-power at best and its battleships and fighting seamen were not greatly feared by nations having an abundance of sea-power, such as the nation of Crete.

While they were speculating upon the unexplained movements of the Egyptian fleet, Abdamon discovered a low cloud close to the horizon of the sea, far to the northwest. He at once declared this to be another fleet approaching from that direction. In a short time the cloud separated into single objects which proved to be fighting galleys, and shortly thereafter Abdamon observed that they were battleships from the great sea power called Karchedon (Carthage). The whole plan was now plain. Egypt, with its relatively small sea power, could not expect to conquer Crete without assistance, and a combination had been made with Karchedon.

Minos at once announced this to be a part of the plan of world dominion which Shishak, Ruler of Egypt, was attempting to work out. Here, indeed, was a situation so terrible that Minos, the young King of Crete, might well have abandoned all hope and even sought his own destruction before the inevitable clash between the three fleets, which must soon take place. Again a hurried consultation

was held and Minos was promised by Abdamon that when they went into battle the manacles would not be locked around his ankles, but that he must be in his position among the rowers lest attention be attracted by his absence and he be found elsewhere on board the ship, and killed.

The Egyptian fleet had now moved a long distance westward, but kept far north of the Cretan shore, evidently for the purpose of uniting with the battleships from Karchedon before coming up to the Cretan capital. In a short time the two fleets were sufficiently close together to salute and exchange signals. The Karchedon fleet then fell in with the Egyptians and all sailed westward and southward bearing down directly upon the city of Gnossus.

Minos had returned to his place among the rowers and could not, therefore, observe what was going on out at sea. Baana was at the big drum directing the rowers' movements. Abdamon went aloft and scanned the Cretan coast, wondering why the Cretan navy did not come out and give battle to the attacking fleet.

The two flotillas had proceeded in formation until they were within a league of shore where the palaces, towers and domes of Gnossus could be seen glittering in the bright sunlight. Suddenly a great commotion was heard upon the deck of the royal galleon and a command from the navigating officer was shouted down the speaking-pipe to Baana to put the rowers at their utmost speed.

The shouting from above decks came clearly down the open hatches. Baana, under orders from the navigating officer had, sometime before, locked the manacles around the ankles of all the rowers except Minos. Having but little knowledge of the Egyptian tongue, Baana watched Minos, to obtain an inkling of the cause for the uproar. He saw wonderment, not unmixed with exultation, in Minos's face, and the cords on his neck swelled out like hempen ropes. He abandoned his place at the oar, dropped from the shelf on which the rowers stood, to the gangway in the centre of the ship and rushed wildly toward the sleeping bunks, from

which he emerged almost immediately with a burnished copper helmet on his head and a heavy broadsword at his side. In some manner unknown to those about him, he had managed to bring on board and keep the helmet and sword concealed throughout his imprisonment on the ship. Moreover, the helmet was not the ordinary kind used by the regular fighting men of Crete, but was highly ornamented and surmounted by a plume of long copper needles in three colors, silver, gold and black lacquer.

Minos disappeared up a stairway and was lost to Baana's sight. But Abdamon, who was fully cognizant of the quickly changing events among the fighting ships, saw him as soon as he arrived on deck, and shouting to him, indicated the best way for his escape from the royal galleon.

It appeared that the Cretan naval commander had been apprised for many days of the combined attack to be made upon Gnossus by the Egyptian and Karchedonian navies, and since Tyre and Karchedon had been hereditary enemies for generations, he applied to the King of Tyre for assistance in repelling the attack. Tyre had responded, heartily, to this appeal and the Phoenician barks and fighting ships, equipped with the amazing instruments of warfare invented and developed by the Tyrians and manned with the unconquerable fighting sailors of Tyre, had sailed to a point north of Crete, joined the Cretan navy there and were waiting eagerly to give battle to the flower of the Egyptian and Karchedonian fighting ships. By waiting until the attacking navies were headed direct for Gnossus the Cretan and Phoenician navies, being apprised of this by their watchboats, bore down upon the attacking ships in open formation and when the alarm was given on board the Egyptian and allied fleets there was no course open to them but to fight or surrender.

By the time Minos had reached the deck of the royal galleon a Cretan fighting ship had pulled up alongside of it and was prepared to give battle.

Minos rushed to the side of the royal galleon and drawing his broadsword signaled the Cretan warship. Instantly a great shout went up from the Cretans and immediately the warship laid alongside and grappled the royal galleon. The fighting Cretans swarmed over the gunwale and, saluting Minos, fell into line at his side. His commands rang out above the roar of battle and with incredible rapidity the forces of the royal galleon were routed, many of its Egyptian men-at-arms put to death, others driven into the sea and the remainder laid in chains.

Placing the command of the royal galleon under Abdamon, with a Cretan crew, Minos boarded and took command of the Cretan fighting ship and drove it into the heart of the great naval battle which was now at its height in all quarters.

The Cretans were splendid sea-fighters, but the Karchedonians, trained to the highest point of naval warfare by their constant struggle for supremacy with the now growing power of Rome, were well-nigh invincible. The Egyptians generally were not very powerful upon the sea, but having brought together the best of their navy and made long preparation for this battle as a part of the plan of the all-powerful Shishak for world dominion, the Cretans would easily have been overcome had it not been for the tremendous assistance from Tyre. As it was, the naval forces of the four nations were about evenly matched and as the battle raged no one could tell what the outcome would be.

It appeared that the officers and men of the Cretan navy adored the young King Minos. His uncle, the usurper of the throne, was cordially hated by the military forces of the kingdom. It had long been supposed that Minos was assassinated by order of his uncle, and the uncle's occupation of the throne was tolerated because, with Minos dead, he would be in the line of succession, but his reign from its beginning had caused murmurs among the people and the military forces, which had grown until the whole nation was ripe for a revolt.

When Minos appeared on the deck of the royal Egyptian galleon, wearing the military helmet of a king of Crete he was instantly recognized by the officers and men of the Cretan warship and at once acclaimed king. Moreover the glorious news of his restoration to power flew from ship to ship until the whole Cretan navy knew it and, wild with joy, plunged into the vortex of the battle with boldness and courage, determined to return to Gnossus victors over their enemies, and proclaim Minos ruler of the nation. Heartened by the return of their beloved prince, they were more than a match for the Egyptians, but the Karchedonians were harder fighters and more difficult to drive back. The latter had for generations disputed the mastery of the seas with Rome and Tyre, generally successful as to Rome, but with the odds against them as to Tyre. The Phoenician barks of Tyre at this time claimed the mastery of the seas and had made their claim good for half a thousand years. Apparently by common consent, the Phoenicians selected the Karchedonian warships for their especial attack, while the Cretans did battle with the galleons of Egypt.

The panorama of the sea-fight was sublime in its majestic grandeur. The surface of the Mediterranean was polished green jade, unruffled except by the backwash from the deploying war galleons.

The ships were constructed for BEAUTY and STRENGTH, preached much but practiced little now. They were built with prows and sterns reared aloft as the new moon is shaped when it hangs low in the west in early autumn, beautiful as the Golden Hind of Sir Francis Drake of fifteen centuries later, whose prototypes they were.

Their graceful hulls were decorated with figures of sea-gods, nymphs, water lilies and birds of the water such as flamingoes with long legs and beautiful plumage, sea-shells and coral, all in bas-relief.

Their prows were flung upward to a great height, with carven figures of beautiful women on each side at the bow, and, rising thence, the front edge was a sharp blade, notched,

and with square cut teeth pointing forward, each tooth a cubit wide and a cubit deep, with which to ram and slash the enemy ships. Their lofty sterns were great structures built up story on story, all ornamented with moulding, carved flowers and cornices. The sails were as beautiful as a red and saffron sunset on semi-tropic seas and were made and trimmed in picturesque shapes to please the eye. The sails of the Karchedonians were white, trimmed with red borders and held in place by ropes and cables of twisted red and white. The Egyptians' sails were brilliant red, trimmed with lattice borders of jet black. The Cretan sails were grey and blue, and the sails of the war-barks from Tyre gold and scarlet.

For a long time the tide of battle surged with immense loss, but without gain to either side. From the very nature of the combat, ships could not be taken captive. It was a war of extermination. Total destruction must come to the vanquished, while to the victors there would be terriffic loss.

For each ship of Egypt or her allies sent to the bottom of the sea a ship on the side of Crete went down.

The Phoenician nation at this period was the most advanced in arts and sciences of the civilized world. This great people were the first of the human race to design a true alphabet and were at this time possessed of the greatest learning and highest civilization in existence. Their naval officers had brought to play a powerful invention. The famous Phoenician barks had been manned with an ingenuity unequaled by the Karchedonians, themselves trained sea-fighters. The famous stone-throwing machine, designed by the Phoenician engineers, was being used with terrible effect. This machine called in after years the Trebuchet (ancient engine of war for hurling stones), required twenty men to operate it and was so provided with weights and counter-balances that a stone weighing a quarter of a ton was shot high in the air and dropped upon the decks of the Karchedonian fighting ships with such force that in well-directed shots ships were sent to the bottom or so badly

wrecked that they limped out of the fight. The great engines of warfare with which the ships of Tyre were equipped began to tell upon the Karchedonians.

Then the fire-booms of the Phoenicians began to shoot out from their fighting barks and to drop upon the decks of their enemies great wire balls filled with combustibles and saturated with an inflammable oil which neither water nor wind affected in the least. These balls, when they reached the decks or rigging of the Karchedonian ships, were roaring masses of flame, absolutely unquenchable. The only possible way to save the ship from destruction was to roll the fire balls into the sea. But this was seldom possible, as they could not be approached near enough to be moved, so when dropped upon the deck of a warship they usually accomplished its destruction.

The sea was now covered with derelicts and floating wreckage to which clung wounded and dying fighting men and sailors. The ships were fighting closer and closer together, some beginning to confine their attacks to grappling each other and fighting to the death over their gunwales and upon their decks. In this respect Karchedon rushed the fighting, but it was welcomed by the Tyrian sailors, who were armed and trained in the use of the most unique fighting weapon known to ancient times,—the tempered glass sword. The art of tempering glass has been lost to the world for more than twenty centuries, but it was well known to the people of Tyre. By its means they made broadswords of glass tough and strong as the steel of today and in the hands of Tyre's highly skilled fighting men the glass sword overmatched any other weapon.

When a Phoenician bark succeeded in grappling a Karchedonian, the fighting soldiers with their glass broadswords cut, slashed and hacked their way step by step across the decks of the enemy until his power was destroyed.

And so the battle surged on and on; the Cretans measuring evenly with the Egyptians; the Phoenicians suffering losses, but inflicting greater losses upon the Karchedonians,

until it became apparent that the Cretans and Phoenicians were outnumbering the Egyptians and Karchedonians. Then individual ships of the allied enemies began to sneak out of the fight one by one, until the whole line began to fall back in retreat more or less orderly at first, but soon a terrible fright ran through the fleeing ships and the retreat became a rout, and the great sea fight for the conquest of Crete was over.

The Cretan and Phoenician flotillas re-formed and sailed into the harbor of Gnossus, the Cretan capital.

Minos, the young king, marched to the palace of his father, the former king, expecting to find his uncle, the usurper, at the palace but was disappointed. The uncle had fled and never again appeared in the island of Crete.

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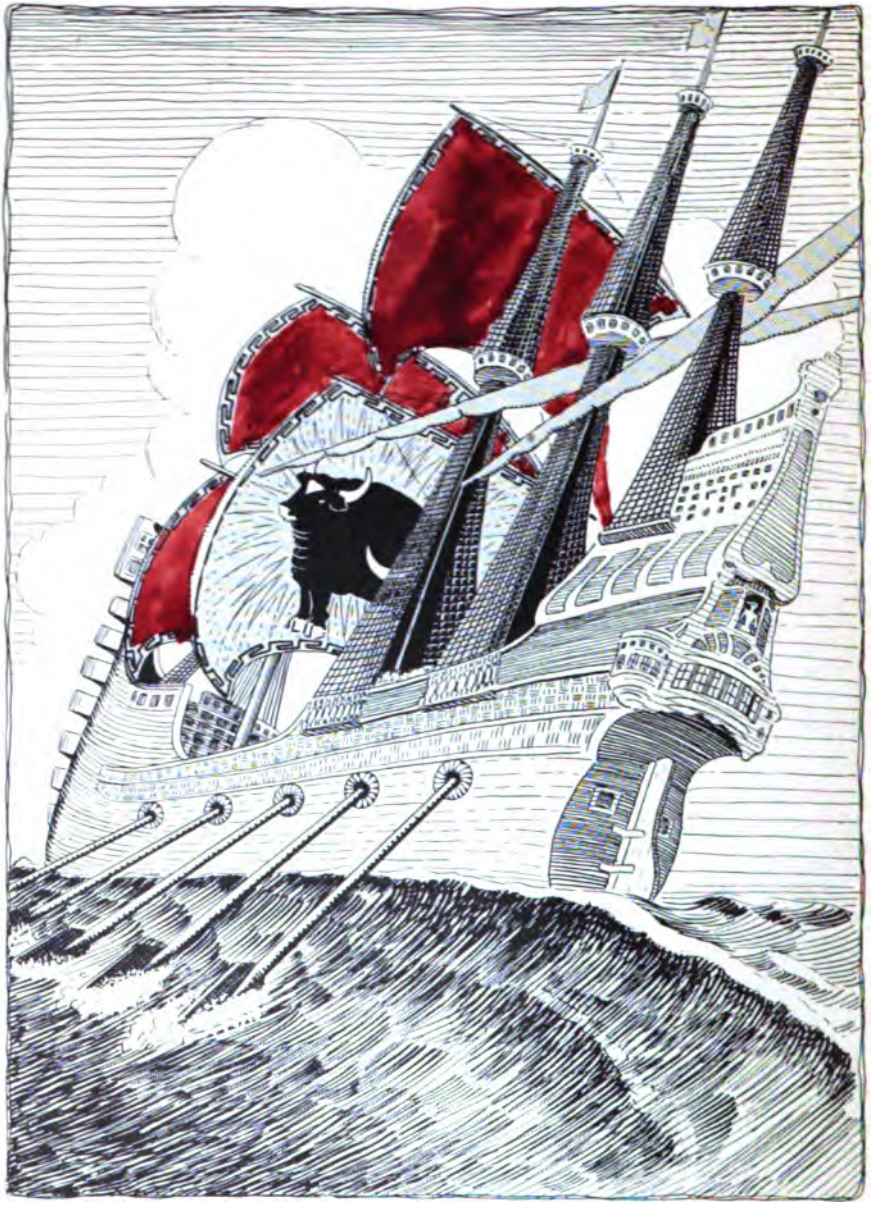

THE TREASURE SHIP

CHAPTER XVII.

The Treasure Ship

Notwithstanding the great destruction of fighting ships in the naval battle of the four nations, there were many captured vessels and much treasure to be divided between the Phoenician and Cretan victors.

The royal galleon under command of Abdamon pulled out of range of battle as soon as he came into control of her, because she was not a fighting ship and could not assist in the battle but would be only a hindrance to her captors, the Cretans, as she would require convoys for her protection if she remained within the battle range. Besides, she was reputed laden with great wealth in precious stones and metals, fine weaves, and beautiful women for the court of the Pharaoh and this treasure could not be endangered by remaining in range of the battle.

When King Minos placed Abdamon with a Cretan crew in command of the royal galleon the Egyptian sailors and fighting men on her were either slain or taken captive and removed to the Cretan warship, except the captain of the galleon who was made prisoner and kept on the royal galleon, as his knowledge of the ship and its precious cargo would be valuable to the captors. Abdamon, trained in the sea, quickly distributed his crew and gave sailing orders to lay to, out of danger, and await the result of the combat.

Then he went below to see Baana, whom he placed in charge of the rowers as captain and, at Baana's suggestion, arranged to fill the place of Minos at once, whose oar was shorthanded in his absence. The Egyptian captain of the

royal galleon had been put in chains when the ship was captured. He was now sent below and put in Minos's place on the rowers' platform and his ankle clasped and locked in the metal anklet chained to the ship. Thus, in a short space, was this commander lowered from the most exalted to the lowest place on the galleon. Such are the fortunes of war in the ever-changing struggle of rulers for more and more power over their fellows.

When the battle was ended the captive vessels were towed into the harbor of Gnossus, the royal galleon among the others. Night had fallen, and the first concern of the victors was food, rest, the care of the wounded and the temporary repairs of their own vessels, to prevent sinking or further injury. The examination of the prizes must come after all of these matters had been cared for.

While all this was taking place, Captain Abdamon, with his close friend, Baana, proceeded with the examination and appraisement of the treasure rooms in the royal galleon, to which no one but the Egyptian captain and his principal officers had been permitted access before this time.

The reputed wealth and beauty on the royal galleon, of which Baana and Abdamon had heard whispers when they first boarded her at Joppa were under, rather than overstated. The ship's treasures were contained in five large compartments for convenience called rooms, but which really comprised one large room supplemented by many smaller chambers, storage closets and lockers; the fifth large room with its connected chambers taking up nearly one quarter of the passenger space in the ship.

All of the rooms were guarded by heavily armed blackamoors of gigantic size and forbidding appearance. These, however, had learned of the change in the control of the ship and offered no resistance to the entrance of the new captain, except at the fifth room and its scores of connected chambers which were guarded by giant black eunuchs, who would permit no one to pass the first door. But of this more will be said presently.

THE FIRST ROOM.

The first section and its chests, shelves, lockers and closets were stored with quaint and strange articles unknown at this day. Only a few will be enumerated here.

Rulers and persons of wealth and power at that time sought for the wonders produced by the greatest minds and the most highly skilled eyes and hands that could be found. It was not unusual for trained artisans to put in most of their lives upon one master production of their brains wrought in precious metals, gems, sculpture, bronze or mosaic. The first treasure room was packed with articles of this sort.

The attention of Captain Abdamon and Baana was first drawn to various devices for noting the passage of time. Among these were water-clocks, sun-dials and moon-dials. The most astonishing of all was the star-clock which was operated by means of reflectors, taking the image of the North Star Sirius into and operating the clock by that means, and with such effect that the beautiful figures which supported the clock would raise long trumpets to their lips and blow from them golden notes marking the passing of the watches of the night.

They next came upon a suit of strange white metal, complete with boots, helmet and glass eye-pieces fitted to the helmet, all of the same general appearance as a modern diving suit, except that the metal was light and thin. Baana expressed the greatest astonishment upon the examination of this suit, but Abdamon explained that it was for the use of the royal physician in time of severe fever epidemics such as the "black plague" and that the wearer of the suit could pass without danger among those infected or dying with any form of contagion. Upon Baana's suggestion that the wearer of the suit would absorb the contagion through breathing infected air, Abdamon explained that no air could enter the headpiece except through a trap in the form of a reversed siphon which was filled with an oil through which the air must pass, and the contagion would be excluded by the oil.

There were numbers of weapons of beautiful workmanship and strange design. But two will be noticed here. One was a lady's bodkin suspended from a beautiful gold neck-chain. The bodkin was sheathed in a tiny golden scabbard. It was only a bodkin in appearance. It was really a weapon so deadly that death from its use was certain, nor was there any trace left behind to indicate the cause.

The bodkin was pierced with a tiny hole lengthwise, so small that the aperture at the end could only be seen with difficulty. The handle of the bodkin contained a coiled copper spring, highly tempered with many convolutions. The chamber in which the spring operated was filled with a light oil to deaden the sound. At the proper time this spring would discharge a poisoned needle through the bodkin with force enough to penetrate the clothing and reach the vitals of the person at which it was aimed. A slow, lingering death followed with certainty. The needle was so small that it left no indication upon the body where it passed through the skin, and the means of death could not be ascertained.

Baana expressed his horror at this fearful instrument of death, but the next one shocked him still more. It was in the form of a highly ornamented wand or scepter such as a king used when dispensing justice from his ivory throne. It was evidently intended to strike the miserable creature who had incurred the king's displeasure, with a death, in the presence of the assembly, which would be so horrible and yet so mysterious that it could only seem to come from the hands of the god Isis or, perhaps, the cloven hoof of the sacred bull, Apis.

The king had but to point the sceptre at the person he desired to exterminate and press a spring, instantly and silently there would be discharged against the victim a drop of acid somewhat similar to cyanide of potassium which produced at once a horrid, writhing death, thought to come from the gods upon the king's imprecations.

There were other marvels, such as caps that would produce sleep; strange bottles that when properly manipulated

would cause the liquid therein to boil without fire; jointed rods of an amazing metal, which could be driven down in the desert to water which would arise by capillary attraction through tiny apertures in the metal.

Another strange article will be noticed. The greatest rivalry existed at that time between highly skilled artisans in every handicraft. The cunning craftsmen of all lands were constantly pitted against each other to maintain the supremacy of their native cities and this constant struggle produced marvelous results.

Abdamon and Baana came upon a small and quaintly carved casket of ivory wrapped in a leathern jacket in which was also a roll of vellum inscribed in many languages, most of which Baana, thanks to the teachings of the Hebrew priest, was able to decipher. The first inscription was in the symbols of ancient Karchedon (Carthage) which said that the ivory casket contained a needle made by the artisans of Karchedon, so small that it was sent out as a challenge to any city in the world to produce a smaller needle.

Then followed inscriptions from various cities through which the needle had passed in its travels. In Iberia (Spain), Gaul (France), Athens, Cappadocia, Lydia, Pamphylia and the islands of the Mediterranean attempts had been made to match or excel the wonderfully small needle, but all were forced to acknowledge defeat, except the workmen of Tyre. Its skilled artisans, the inscription said, had cut off the eye end of the needle and made it into a cap for the remainder of the needle; then they took a thread of a spider's web which is always composd of many tiny strands twisted together, untwisted the thread and, using a single strand, hardened it by a method known only to themselves, glued an atom of sapphire to the end of it and with this drill, so small that it could only be seen through a microscope, bored out the heart of the tiny Cathagenian needle; made three infinitesimal but perfect needles, put them in the hollow needle, replaced the cap on this needle case and were sending it to

the rest of the skilled workmen of the world with their challenge to produce its equal!

THE SECOND ROOM.

The second room was stored with beautiful fabrics woven, knitted and felted from the looms of Tyre and the far East.

These were all carefully wrapped with other cloth and packed in massive chests of sandalwood and cedar of Lebanon which were ornamented with beautiful mosaics and inscriptions; in inlays of gold, silver, mother of pearl, amber and rare woods.

The carpeting was hand-woven, composed of knotted warp and woof, the knots running as high as eight hundred to a square, the size of three barleycorns on a side (one inch square). Such work requires endless time and patience, but is all but indestructible. Woven into the carpets were symbols which told the history of the family producing them, also events in the political world; matters of general importance, such as the signs of the Zodiac, the elements of chemistry as then understood; great events, such as earthquakes, eclipses and other similar happenings.

There were fabrics woven from spun glass and from gold and silver threads. Baana was profoundly interested in some garments woven from silk in which the feathers and brilliant plumage of birds of Paradise were caught in the weave in such manner as completely to cover the cloth, the feathers all arranged in designs indicating that the garments were intended for the use of royalty only.

There were bales of cloth impervious to water, and yet others that fire would not injure. Rich weaves were found carrying raised designs of the poppy and lotus flowers, which close examination disclosed were really tiny bags of rich, soft leather beautifully tanned and colored and filled with poppy-dust, which would at once bring sleep to those lying upon or under it.

Perhaps the most interesting fabric examined was a bed coverlet apparently of camel's-hair beautifully brocaded and colored but which, in reality, was made from tempered copper wire so strong and tightly woven that no dagger or other sharp instrument could pierce it and reach anyone sleeping beneath its protecting folds; this form of assassination being common in high places in that age.

THE THIRD ROOM.

Abdamon and Baana entered another treasure room stocked with perfumes, musks, attars and other sweet odors from all parts of the old world, packed in the most marvelous containers,—beautifully engraved or etched bottles, some inlaid with silver, gold and precious stones, some cunning and grotesque, made of skin to represent tiny animals and birds. Others, for powders and incense, were boxes of the most costly woods and precious metals, most of them beautifully carved, inlaid and graven with jewel designs of the morning glory, hyssop, acacia, and honeysuckle. Among these were alabaster boxes of snow-white, filled with every delightful fragrance, which were thrown in the mausoleum during obsequies over the dead.

There were musks of castor so powerful that they could be used for the most unique and startling purposes. They were of many different odors and bouquets, all of which were replete with hidden meaning to those who understood them, there being a language of perfumes known only to the initiated. By means of this language a communication of thoughts could be carried on between those familiar with it, under the very noses, it might be said, of others without their knowledge. In this manner conferences between monarchs and important persons were often secretly controlled to the advantage of those who understood the musks, which were changed and given out as those using them desired. Assassination of kings and rulers were arranged for and carried through in the very presence of the victim, by this subtle method of communication.

These musks were so powerful that caravans could, by means of their odors, communicate with following caravans if not more than a day behind, informing them of locations of water-holes, dangerous places and possibilities of attack by Bedouins or desert tribesmen.

There were boxes of ambergris, that strange and excessively rare substance thrown out by whales, and found floating or on the seacoast, the lucky finder of even a small quantity being made richer than if he had located a mine of free gold.

Perfume-makers from the earliest times have paid fabulous prices for this rare substance and it is as valuable today as at any time in the world's history; and yet it is not a perfume at all, but is used as a base necessary in the preparation of perfumes and blending of boquets.

There were jars of attars; essential oils obtained by the distillation of roses and other flowers; citron and orange oils from the great island of Sicily; gum, resins and balsams of benzoin, tolu, storax and myrrh from the far East; perfumed toilet soap made from lupine flower, glasswort and lote leaves; perfumes for the bath and fountain.

Among the choicest perfumes were powders, to be sprinkled in water and poured into bowls of glass, marble or porcelain kept in the sleeping chamber, which would induce sleep; other perfumes in the form of spun threads which looked like silk, and when woven into pillows, spreads or coverlets would make the sleeper's rest deep and profound.

There were perfumes imprisoned in delicate globules which might be thrown upon the hair and clothing of the guests of the household; the globules thus broken would release their contents to the guests' great delight; pots of incense from the far East, so deep and rich in their Oriental perfumes that their odors would cause the occupants of the chambers where they were released to travel in their imaginations through the lands of the Yellow River and the distant Ind, and in deep reveries the dreamer would hear the low, continuous chanting of white-bearded priests, punc-

tuated by the clash of scimitars upon brazen shields, the stolid "chock" of bullock-carts and the jingle of the ropes of bells on the trappings of swaying elephants as they moved in long procession through narrow overhung streets.

THE FOURTH ROOM.

The fourth room contained precious stones and metals, and seemed to the two men examining it to embrace an amount of wealth so fabulous that no computation of it could ever be made.

There were great quantities of gold and silver ingots in massive boxes heavily bound with copper bands. Gold and silver money was not coined then, or at least the coinage of it was so small that it had not passed into general use. It was cast into ingots and balls and when used commercially or in barter and trade was weighed and the value thus ascertained. There were quantities of precious stones beautifully cut by Tyrian, Grecian and Assyrian lapidaries. They comprised diamonds, emeralds, rubies and other stones of lesser values, and the more costly ones were beautifully mounted and bedded in caskets of silver and gold, lined with deep black velvet.

Baana, through the patient teaching of the Hebrew priest, had acquired much knowledge of the wondrous language used by lapidaries in engraving upon precious stones, which at this period had reached a development so marvelous that those of the present age who inquire into it are lost in wonder at its scope and thoroughness.

In the early chapters of this book it is stated that knowledge of writing was not common in the age of King Solomon, and for that matter it was not general for more than twenty-five centuries later. It must not be thought, however, that the world was ignorant or for that reason, had no method of preserving its records, as the very opposite was true. The records of Babylon in the days of Hamurabbi the King, 2250 B. C., are well preserved and are found in such quantities today that the manners, customs and laws of the

Babylonians may all be thoroughly understood. No records of any kind are now being made that would last any such period, or even a considerable fraction of it.

But of all records of that time those made by the cunning lapidary were undoubtedly the most wonderful and lasting. These marvelous precious-stone cutters had, in centuries of development, acquired the ability to cut upon the facets of precious stones the names of kings, or cities and landscapes, or portraits; the history of the wearer of the gem or his family record back into the remote past; a great poem; the story of a great event; the history of a great nation; and one master workman had so cut the many faces of a single stone, devoting his entire life to the work, that it related the history of the world down to that time. No record in any form could be so permanent and enduring. (The most highly prized possessions in worldly wealth of any people are their family diamonds and precious stones.) And what can be said of no records of the present day, they were indestructible. Being very valuable they would be carefully protected, and records of any kind cut upon their faces would endure throughout the ages.

Baana was now able to read to his friend Abdamon the great mysteries of the world, engraved upon the masses of gems opened to their view. They were profoundly astonished at the beauty of a lute in miniature, which was composed of more than two thousand cut stones. Upon each stone was engraved a cabalistic symbol representing a Phoenician proverb. This required at least twenty years' constant labor by an expert lapidary in its preparation.

The room of precious stones in the royal galleon included large numbers of seals of two general forms. One was the very ancient type of cylindrical or rolling seal which, applied to the wax by rolling over it, left the imprint of the seal upon it. They were beautifully engraved with animals and landscapes and bore Phoenician, Grecian and other inscriptions carved from Chalcedony, rock crystal, fossil, coral,

amethyst and milky quartz of the most beautiful tints and shades.

The engraving and cutting was done with sapphire-pointed drills instead of the grinding disks of the present time. These disks were well known to and scorned by the lapidaries of that age. A lapidary of that time, before he was permitted to proceed with the work of cutting stones, served seven years as an apprentice and then passed examinations and proved himself educated in the political history of the world, and in the arts and sciences. The cutting of precious stones required a wide general knowledge, and as the most important records of those times were preserved in that manner, it was necessary that only learned men should be permitted to wield the sapphire drill. Such gem-cutters stood in the place of the great artists of the later Renaissance. They were men of powerful imagination and wonderful genius. They regarded one who used a disk for grinding precious stones as a regular physician regards a quack. Unfortunately, the great skill and art of the lapidary has, like many other matchless arts of that golden age, disappeared and become completely lost to the world in the sordid commercialism of later years.

Continuing their examinations of the treasure chamber, Captain Abdamon and Baana came upon scarabs done in jade and serpentine, of Babylonian and Etruscan design, believed to be amulets and charms potent for the good of the wearer. They were carved with talismanic signs and symbols indicating the various evils against which they were proof. A curious form of carving upon them was noticed, where they had been sliced in two parts, the newly sliced faces again engraved with magical characters and set in rings to be worn for further protection against evils.

The collection of engraved and cut pieces of a beautiful stone called pitdah translated from the Hebrew (Old Testament) as topaz, was of inimitable beauty. The topaz of this period was different from and superior to the topaz of today. It was found in solid blocks or veins, also in small pear-

shaped nodules curiously flecked, in this form commonly called "Job's-tears". For centuries the source of supply of the Old Testament topaz was kept secret by the favored few who knew the location of the priceless mines where the gem could be obtained. The lapidaries or gem cutters of the ancient world and the merchants and dealers in gems had, through centuries, developed among themselves a legend that there existed at a distant point in unchartd seas a small islet which, though uninhabited and devoid of vegetation, was as fabulously rich as the "valley of diamonds" into which Sinbad the sailor was dropped by the roc. They whispered among themselves that the secret of this island was known only to a certain family which, because of the wealth of these precious gems mined from this forbidding isle of stone in a distant sea, had become one of the ruling families of the world.

The vague whisperings that circulated among the gem merchant-princes and the leading lapidaries were that the "topaz isle" was a solid point of topaz, standing up out of turbulent and boiling seas far to the south where the heat of the brazen sun melted the cement from a vessel's seams; that it could be reached only by galleons especially built with dovetailed joints to withstand the terrific heat. Even then the galleons must be transported in pieces on the backs of camels a great distance across the trackless desert sands to a faroff seacoast, and there put together and launched to reach the topaz isle out in these unknown seas. The dangers and discomforts they said, were rewarded upon arrival at the island, for then quantities of the gem known to jewelers as "peridot" or "noble olivine" could be obtained, —of the most gorgeous colors,—pale yellow, olive, pistachio and leek-green. The legend said that the secret of the "topaz isle" had been kept in this family for ages, but that once, in bygone centuries, a son had fallen deeply in love with a daughter of an unfriendly merchant prince. In his desire to win her for his wife he had told her the location of the "topaz isle." An expedition had been organized by the rival

house, which was accompanied by the young man, to show the way, and by his newly-wedded wife. The family owning the isle learned of the expedition in time to entrap these adventurers at the isle. Having a superior force, all in the expedition of the rival house, including the treacherous son and his dearly-bought bride, were impaled upon bronze spikes secured to the block of topaz, their bleaching skeletons and grinning skulls mounting guard over the great gem forever.

This topaz isle, rich as the legend said, was in after centuries located in the Red Sea, where it became known and charted as the Island of St. John.

Of this beautiful chrysolite called topaz were found in the fourth room many exquisite cut stones and carvings, only one of which we shall notice at any length. From the different shades of yellow topaz there were a large number of perfectly carved lions, in every pose,—from the size of a pea to a stone's weight. Abdamon explained to Baana that they were intended for the Pharaoh in person and for gifts to his nobles, the priests of the bull, and his favorites. In Egypt the yellow lion was a demi-god but little below the bull Apis in power. The reason for this worship of the lion was that the wealth, the food supply and the very existence of Egypt as a great people depended upon the annual rise and overflow of its lands by the river Nile, and it had been learned by the astute Egyptian astrologers that the Nile always began its great rise in the constellation of Leo.

In one section were vases and amphora of semi-transparent stones, fluted columns of agate with ornate capitols and bases, beautiful mosaics, group carvings, and spheres or crystal balls of transparent quartz obtained only on the great island of Madagascar, then considered to be at the confines of the earth.

There were quantities of amber obtained from the shores of the Baltic, artistically pressed and cut. The cutting of amber is a separate part of the work of the lapidary requiring a special skill.

The collection of carved ivories was such as to baffle comprehension. It included every possible ornamental design for the rooms of the home and for the adornment of the wearer. Bracelets, brooches, combs, earrings and many other articles richly engraved and set with sparkling gems or lined with glossy black enamel were startling in their beauty. Lyres of ivory with golden strings vied with ivory flutes and trumpets bound with burnished, rich, black silver bands. Ivory sundials with all of the zodiac in symbols, ornamented with floral designs in natural colors, were of striking beauty.

Velvet-lined silver caskets and bags of leather were filled with quantities of precious stones, many of them beautifully cut, engraved and highly polished, and others in the rough, awaiting the artistic skill of the lapidary, completed the collections of gems in the treasure ship. All were of such immense value as to bewilder the mind in attempting to appraise their worth. The commercial value of this marvelous collection, however great, was insignificant compared with its historic and sentimental value; upon this no measure could be set.

Baana, forgetting the wealth before him, would have been supremely happy if he could have spent a year of his life in studying the profound mysteries recorded upon the splendid gems.

From the burning heart of a glorious ruby, mined in the far East, cut by a Babylonian craftsman of heroic mind, he read, with swelling bosom, the matchless Sephiroth of their wondrous people.

He saw, through the polished facets of the gem, as one who looks out of the mouth of a dark cavern into the great light of a blazing day, the very beginning of the Aryan race. Two great rivers flowed from out the misty northland and approached each other by mighty sweeps and curves, moving in majesty over the plains of Shinar toward the copper swells of a tropic sea. Where they came nearest each other, close to their mouths, between their shores and laved

by each, lay a land so fair that its picture through the cavern's mouth transported the dreamer from earthly things to the realms of eternal light. The teeming land was loaded with grains and fruits, brilliant with beautifully-plumed birds and dazzling with the blooms of flowers. Animals of strange shapes and colors abounded in plenty, all submissive to man who in strength and pride ruled as the king of this Paradise, accompanied by woman in her peerless beauty.

In the garden grew a tented city set in perfect order, with banners flung high from its outposts. Lumbering trains of bullock-carts came to the city out of the south, drawn by water-buffaloes, laden with coral, pearls and ambergris from sun-scorched southern seas. Out of the sunset, like giant specters of the night, came long caravans of laden camels bearing golden grain and papyrus rolls. Out of the north came trains of dromedaries laden with yellow amber, burnished copper, tapestries and rolls of hammered leather. Out of the east came far-flung winding lines of elephants, bearing on their backs the wealth of the Ind; beaten vessels of gold and bags of blood-red rubies and emeralds green as the eyes of the cheetah.

Boats, with sails of blue and scarlet, skimmed the silver surfaces of the two great rivers, their prows pointed toward the beautiful tented city.

But the tents are greater than before; they are now mighty temples with solid walls, and the city has become so great that all the earth bows to its majesty. Its outer walls reach to the sky. Its sides are two hundred furlongs across, —half a day's journey for a camel. Its men-at-arms who protect its walls, if stood in a row finger-tip to finger-tip, could not be counted by the rider of a dromedary at full speed in ten golden suns. Its gates are solid brass; its gardens are dreams of splendor; its palaces treasure-houses of measureless wealth. Before its monarch all other kings and rulers bow in submission to his limitless power. The majestic temples are ruled by scarlet-robed priests who chant their praises to its hundred gods of earth, air, harvest, war

and of everything treasured by this all-powerful people. A great peal of trumpets crashes through the king's palace. The banquet is spread upon plates of gold and cloth of woven silver. Thousands of the noble and wealthy sit at the banquet with the king. His soothsayers proclaim his greatness, and the wealth of the nations of the world moves in richly laden caravans to his unconquered city.

The story of the birth of the race and of the growth of Babylon through countless centuries to its earthly dominion was unfolded in the heart of the glorious ruby.

A blue sapphire, dug from Phoenician mines and cut by a Tyrian genius of exalted soul, glowed its message from its unfathomed depths. Baana looked in its heart and through the cavern's mouth saw the plains of Shinar stretched through the night to the North Star. Upon his prayer rug in the desert sands, with naked feet, a bearded prophet bowed and yielded up his soul in prayer to that one God to whose power his entire being was attuned.

"O mighty Architect of Heaven and Earth and of all things beyond human grasp! Guide Thy people true, that they may know the wrong and the right and hand the knowledge on to ages coming after so long as this, Thy world, shall onward roll!"

Then thundered forth the Voice:

"Abram! Thou shalt be called Abraham, father of thy people. Take thou a bullock and sever it in twain and by this covenant all the lands from the river Nile to the great rivers of the East even to the Euphrates I give thee and thy seed forever. The flower of Babylon and its hundred gods shall be broken. The lion of the desert shall roar through its deserted palaces and the jackal of the poisoned sands shall seek through its golden temples where to bring forth its whelps. But thy people shall be chosen of the earth forever and I Thy God am the God of all, till all shall end."

Thus spake the Tyrian sapphire from out of the blue depths of its azure heart, and when Baana had read its message of hope he again turned to the blood-red ruby

graved by the craftsman of Babylon, and the crimson glow in its ruddy heart was more defiant but less compelling than the steady blue of the glorious sapphire. Baana sank to his knees and silently offered up his thanks to the God in the Tyrian sapphire's heart.

THE FIFTH ROOM.

Baana and Abdamon now approached the last of the treasure rooms with some hesitation. One-fourth of the entire ship had been used exclusively for what was perhaps esteemed the greatest treasure, the beautiful women that were being taken to the court of the mighty Pharaoh at Memphis.

Heavily armed black eunuchs of enormous size guarded all entrances to the fifth room and its many connected chambers.

The chief of the eunuchs, a gigantic blackamoor of fierce and terrible appearance, would not permit Baana nor Abdamon to enter this portion of the ship. The chief, and all of the eunuchs, had received the usual orders given those placed in charge of beautiful women intended for royal or wealthy persons, and these orders were that the women under their charge must be safely kept from intrusion by men. If they failed in their trust they would suffer a hideous death by torture, usually in the following manner; the abdomen was slit, an entrail pulled out and nailed to a post and the miserable victim driven around the post with the bastinado until his entrails were torn out, and he fell and expired slowly and in mortal agony. This threat was invariably carried out, so that all eunuchs who had charge of women understood that they must suffer this death if they failed to keep those under their charge from being molested. In attempting to pass the chief eunuch they addressed him in Hebrew, Assyrian and Phoenician, to all of which he shook his head, indicating that he was not familiar with those languages. Abdamon then addressed him in the Egyptian tongue, in which he replied but positively refused them admission to

the women's quarters. It was explained that Abdamon was now captain of the ship and could have the eunuchs put to death if he so ordered, but this had no effect.

Baana and Abdamon then went to the rowers' deck, released the Egyptian captain and brought him to the main deck. Here they explained the situation to him. He was obdurate and said that he would assist them to anything else about the ship, but the Pharaoh, his master, was hard as the stone in the walls of Memphis in regard to permitting the admission of men to the quarters of women intended for the royal palace of Egypt, this being the greatest of all crimes in his eyes. Sooner or later the Pharaoh would have him in his power and would put him to death if he permitted Baana or Abdamon to enter the sanctuary of the women on the royal galleon.

While he was talking, Abdamon had been studying him narrowly and finally said:

"Thou hast a scar on thy left hip where thou wast run through by pirates on the Black coast and wast left for dead on a broken spar more than a score of years ago."

The former captain looked closely at Abdamon and answered:

"I have. Art thou the man who picked me up and took me to Rhodes in thy open boat?"

"I am," said Abdamon, "I thought I knew thee when we shipped with thee at Joppa, but had no mind to broach it then. Open the sanctuary of the women to us and I promise thee they shall come to no harm from my friend or myself and besides, thou shalt not again be sent back to the rowers' benches, but shall by my guest for the present."

In Oriental lands the most sacred thing that can be placed in one's hands is the care of women for the royal palace. It is sure death, and hideous at that, to permit access of men to their sanctuary. As the Egyptian captain said in answer to Abdamon's last request, the women might not be molested by Baana and himself, but such a statement to the Pharaoh, in attempted explanation of the violation

of orders, would only exasperate the great king as being a declaration so preposterous as to be beyond human belief.

However, be it said to the credit of the Egyptian captain, he finally complied with Abdamon's request, not because of fear of death at Abdamon's hands, but because of his gratitude for the saving of his life many years before.

Upon certain whispered communications from him to the chief of the eunuchs, the gigantic black tardily and angrily lowered his scimitar and unlocked and unbarred the entrance to the quarters of the women.

The many compartments in which the women were located were beautifully furnished with the richest satin hangings, deep rich carpets and rugs and highly polished mirrors, making the whole section of the ship luxuriously rich and delightful. The chief of the eunuchs led the way with his mighty scimitar still bared and ready for use. The Egyptian captain followed with Abdamon and Baana in the rear.

In the different apartments were found women of every race, color and type of beauty. All were lovely, as they were the pick of the known world. None other could possibly be taken on board the treasure ship.

They were in various classes, from the darkest to the lightest skins and from slight to the most voluptuous in form.

The women from Iberia were of the complexion of light olive. Their hair, eyebrows and lashes were dark. The lines of the eyebrows were curved in two graceful bows. Their eyes were deep scintillating black. Their forms were voluptuous, but lissom and graceful.

To Baana, not experienced in the contemplation of beautiful women, they seemed wondrously beautiful until, led by the giant black, he passed from the Iberian beauties to the rooms of the women from Cappadocia. These he thought were still more beautiful than their dark-complexioned sisters.

The Cappadocians were the reverse of the Iberians. Their hair was brilliant gold; their complexions white and clear; their eyes deep blue.

From apartment to apartment they slowly made their way, led by the fierce eunuch and followed by the Egyptian ship captain, who explained to them the nativity and characteristics of the beautiful women from distant lands, who were found in the many apartments of this section.

At last the mighty eunuch, still in advance with scimitar drawn, turned and faced the little party, indicating that the investigation of the women's quarters had ended, although there was a door at the end of the corridor. Abdamon and the Egyptian ship captain were turning to retrace their steps when Baana, naturally watchful, spoke to Abdamon in the Phoenician tongue that the chief of the eunuchs might not understand and said:

"The chief eunuch has not opened the last compartment. It gives out upon the sea from the stern of the ship, with no doorway to it except from where we now are, and there are no sea-windows in these walls toward the rear, as there would be if this were the last chamber."

Abdamon quickly grasped the force of Baana's suggestion and, speaking to the Egyptian captain, asked an explanation. The latter said that he had never been beyond the door at the end of the corridor, and had always supposed it to be a storage place for the supplies of the women. This was spoken in Egyptian and was understood by the gigantic black, who at once appeared to be seized with a fit of madness. He lunged toward Abdamon, swinging his mighty scimitar, and would have cloven him in twain but for the agility of Baana, who, stooping, rammed the black in his belly, throwing him against the wall of the corridor, thus giving Abdamon and the Egyptian captain time to pinion his arms, after which Baana disarmed him, and he was chained.

Baana, Abdamon and the Egyptian, now thoroughly interested, with great difficulty broke open the massive door

at the end of the corridor, and entered the combination of magnificently furnished chambers into which it led.

If the dusky beauties from Iberia and the golden-haired goddesses from Cappadocia had seemed lovely to Baana, the one glorious creature who now appeared to him and his companions, was the embodiment of all their charms and a hundred more besides. Abdamon, hardened old sea-dog, who had seen all manner of beautiful women, expressed his utter amazement at the exquisite creature before them. The Egyptian captain at once bespoke his astonishment at the marvel of loveliness in the secret chamber, and disclaimed any knowledge concerning her.

To Baana she appeared a divine creature from the world above, of such transcendant beauty as to be classed with the angels. Abashed by the uncontrolled admiration of the three men, the frightened woman clasped her hands over her face to conceal her confusion and waited in dreadful anticipation. She appeared about twenty-five years of age, and was of medium height, with form of exceeding grace; her limbs were beautifully moulded, straight and gracefully tapered to her hands and feet. Her complexion was light pink, shading into deeper pink in dimpled cheeks. Her lips were like scarlet ribbons shaped into a graceful bow with tiny knots at the ends. Her dark hair fell in a mass about her shoulders. Her eyes were glorious deep wells, dark and unfathomable, with still darker smudges in the pupils. Her dark eyebrows were perfect arches, as if painted by the brush of a master. Her eyelashes were long and sweeping. Her chin was round and dimpled and her neck as if carved from pink marble.

"She is more beautiful than the lotus flowers on the bosom of mother Nile," exclaimed the Egyptian captain.

Abdamon said: "She is lovelier than an argosy of carved sandalwood with golden sails on a silver sea."

Then spoke Baana earnestly: "She is more wondrously beautiful than the reflection of the stars of the heavens in the blue depths of the sea of Gallilee."

The huge black, scowling with hatred, could contain his rage no longer. He shouted in furious anger at the three men who had just spoken:

"O, thou foal of the wild ass! Thy knowledge of women is less than the Abyssinian boar knows of a queen's chamber. Thy babble is slaver of swine at their slop. This woman is every beauty of the earth pressed into one. She is lovelier than a caravan of a thousand white elephants in trappings of red leather and hammered gold, crusted with rubies and emeralds, laden with spices, honey and wine, driven by daughters of the moon, clothed in the mists of morning, stained blood-red with the sunsets of my birthland, Ethiopia.

"Three-score years have I judged the beautiful women of the world's great palaces.

I saw her yesteryear at Tyre and told the Pharaoh. At the cost of a nation's wars for a century he sent out this treasure ship solely that I might bring her to him. The ship's other treasures, valued more than fifty kingdoms, were to mislead the king of Tyre. The naval battle for Crete was to hide this wondrous woman from Tyre's fighting lions of the sea, whose upturned prows, white with billowing foam, searching the sea for her ere this, have rammed their jagged fronts in every harbor's mouth. The Phoenician fighting devils of the land, with swords of toughened glass, on speeding dromedaries, have scoured Lebanon's mountains and the Assyrian plains to find the hidden place of this flawless jewel. Know, thou beasts, that she is wife to Tyre's puissant prince, the noble Pericles, second in wealth and power only to the king; that with my giant blacks I stole her from the palace gardens and hid her in the place long prepared on this ship, to take her to my Pharaoh who promised for her my liberty and a Cabal (a kingdom) of ten wealthy cities to me for life.

"O, thou senseless clods! that the only perfect pearl that ever was should fall to thy foul hands. Her like will come not to this earth again till Leo falls out of the jeweled skies

and mother Nile sends no more her life-giving sap down to the parched lands below.

"I pray to Apis that thy carcasses may find their graves in the bellies of crocodiles and thy souls return into the stomachs of the wild ass from whence they came. My life's blood may be drawn drop after drop by ten thousand stinging wasps if Apis will but grant my prayer!"

When his rage had spent itself and all was quiet the beauteous creature spoke in the tongue of Tyre, and her voice was like the notes in the middle register of a golden trumpet blown softly by the evening winds, fragrant with the perfume of Lebanon's cedars. She was covered with confusion, but spoke with extreme simplicity:

"I am of the Royal family of Tyre. By the king's wish, I was, in early youth, married to the aged Tyrian prince, Pericles, who holds great wealth and power in the kingdom."

"This hideous blackamoor, while the treasure ship was in the grand canal of Tyre trading with our merchants for their valued wares, violated our friendly port and kidnapped me in the gardens of the noble prince, my husband, and brought me to the treasure ship for Pharaoh.

"O, gentle sirs! Return me to Tyre and my husband will bestow on thee such wealth as never fell into thy dreams before."

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Princess of Tyre

After King Minos had disposed of the most urgent matters he called Captain Abdamon and Baana before him at his palace in Gnossus to render an account of the treasure ship. They described with much detail the great treasures on board the royal galleon. King Minos listened with interest to their description of the objects of wealth, rare workmanship and great beauty with which the ship was loaded. When the story of the kidnapped wife of the wealthy nobleman of Tyre had been related, the king promptly ordered that the princess be returned at once to Tyre and delivered over to her husband; that as Hiram, King of Tyre, was his friend and ally, he must be notified by a special warship where the princess had been found, and how she would be returned to Tyre.

He then said to Abdamon and Baana that through them he had been restored to his kingdom and that he now wished to reward Abdamon by making him captain of one of the war galleys of his fighting navy. Abdamon expressed his gratitude at this offer, but said that while he would always have the kindest feelings for the king of Crete and would fight in his defense and for his kingdom whenever needed, yet having led a seafaring man's life of great activity, he wished now to follow the sea for his living, and if the King of Crete felt sufficiently kind toward him to assist him in returning to his old occupation, this would give him more satisfaction than to command a war galley in the king's navy.

The King of Crete spoke his mind quickly and ordered that, at the expense of the royal treasury, an argosy or merchant vessel of moderate capacity, equipped with both sails

and rowers, be delivered to Abdamon as a gift from the king. He enquired from Abdamon what points or coasts he intended to sail for and was informed by Abdamon that he especially desired to load his ship with trinkets and baubles of glass, copper and brass and some brilliantly colored goods and stuffs with which to trade with the Ethiopians for elephants' tusks and other ivory which was much in demand in the great commercial cities of Tyre, Gnossus and Karchedon. He said that he purposed stocking his ship, if he could obtain the merchandise, and sailing for the mouth of the Nile; thence up that great river as far as his ship would go, and thereafter to pierce Ethiopia by caravan.

King Minos, pleased to learn Abdamon's desires, ordered that the ship be laden with the stores described by Abdamon and provisioned for the voyage, and he charged Abdamon with an important duty on behalf of himself, King of Crete:

"I desire that when thou sailest from Gnossus, the prow of thy ship be turned toward Tyre and that, accompanied by thy friend Baana, thou shalt afford safe conduct for the Princess of Tyre on board thy ship and that thou seest she is guarded from every intrusion and treated with that favor due a princess of the court of a friendly monarch. When thou hast delivered her at Tyre, proceed then upon thy voyage and at a convenient time present thyself at this court and report thy welfare."

"And thou, Baana," continued the king, "how may I recompense thee for thy great help in my dire need?"

Baana answered modestly that his requirements were small and easily satisfied. He was not skilled as a mariner, he said, and such handicraft as he had acquired was learned in his work as a carver upon the ornamental parts in and about the great Temple at Jerusalem. He then explained to Minos the terrible situation of King Solomon and his people, and showed that the Pharaoh planned after the subjection of Palestine to make himself ruler of the world and force all peoples to abandon their religion and grovel on their bellies in the dust in worship of Apis, the bull. He explained

to King Minos that the forces of Tyre no doubt were even then streaming across Palestine and into Jerusalem to fight in defense of the civilized world against slavery under the bull, and he besought King Minos to summon all of his military power by land and by sea and to embark speedily for Joppa and march thence to Jerusalem, joining the kings of Palestine and Phoenicia in their last stand against the hideous darkness threatening to overspread the world.

Baana closed eloquently:

"This, O, King of Crete, shall be my reward. I ask none else."

King Minos answered Baana with great feeling, saying that he would not delay, but would move speedily to join in the defense of Jerusalem.

"But," he said, "there shall be individual reward for thee, Baana, for the love I bear thee and it shall be greater than bags of gold and jars of oil. Farewell to thee both and hasten with thy precious treasure to Tyre."

King Minos then caused beautiful presents for the King of Tyre to be loaded on board the argosy, directed that it be manned with twenty rowers, rigged with scarlet sails in honor of its precious burden, the princess of Tyre, armed it with a small detachment of fighting sailors and thus, completely equipped, saw it despatched under the command of Abdamon, for that peerless mistress of the seas, the high-walled city of Tyre.

Abdamon and Baana were bosom friends and had great affection for each other, as do men generally who have been associated together in severe trials and situations of danger. Abdamon, however, was nearly double Baana's age, and had cruised the seas and traded along the coasts of all lands known to mariners of that time. He was shrewd and experienced in human nature. He had detected the boundless interest which flooded the heart of Baana when the acquaintance between him and the beautiful Princess of Tyre had gone far enough for them to hold long conversations in the Phoenician tongue. It had not escaped Abdamon's shrewd

mind that the marriage of the beautiful princess to the aged nobleman of King Hiram's court was for convenience only and that the prince, her husband, was eighty-seven years of age. Abdamon, therefore, as soon as the argosy cleared the port of Gnossus, called Baana to the captain's quarters of the beautiful ship which was Abdamon's very own, and pointing to the gracefully swelling scarlet sails, he said:

"Seest thou those sheets pulling at the masts of our ship, Baana?"

To this Baana replied:

"I do, Abdamon. It is a glorious sight. But why, my faithful friend, are thy rowers not sweeping the seas and aiding the sails in pushing thy craft toward Tyre?"

To this Abdamon replied with an expression of peculiar wisdom around his narrowed eyelids:

"It is a long distance, Baana, from the mouth of the Nile to the first cataract, and my rowers must gain strength to pull the ship against the green current of mother Nile. Therefore, from here, across the great sea to Tyre, none but the winds shall move our argosy, and if the sea be calm or the breath from Boreas light, it shall but afford more time for my rowers to become strong. Mark you, Baana, we have on the ship a treasure of such worth that all the gold in the Temple of Solomon would not pay the owner if it be injured by so much as the weight of a spider's web. I can trust none but thee to guard this treasure and thou shalt be charged with no other duty until we reach the grand canal of Tyre. Do thou devote thyself solely to the protection of the Princess of Tyre and see that she is delivered in health and happiness at the palace of Hiram, the munificent king."

Baana entered upon his duties with satisfaction. He endeavored to anticipate every want of the princess and devoted his thoughts solely to devising amusement and entertainment for her. The voyage required more than the usual time, since the rowers were not brought into use, and the breezes were not favorable. However, in time the beautiful argosy grappled the great bronze rings at the wharf in

the grand canal of Tyre, and Abdamon went below to the apartments of the beautiful princess to apprise her of their arrival. When Abdamon came upon Baana and the princess in her apartments he explained that it was now time to go ashore and deliver the princess at the court. Baana seemed stupefied by this information and said:

"How can it be possible, Abdamon, that the ship has reached Tyre, when we have but cleared the harbor of Gnossus by two days span?

Abdamon turned his face away and looked out of a porthole to keep Baana and the princess from noticing his strong efforts to control himself. Then turning to Baana he said:

"The Princess of Tyre holds the thread of time in her shapely hands. It has been six times the span of two days since the city of Gnossus sank behind our stern."

The tramp of armed men was now heard upon the deck above and immediately a captain of Tyre's armies appeared below, asking for Captain Abdamon. Abdamon saluted and answered to his name. The captain said that he was to furnish military escort for the Princess of Tyre to the king's palace, and was to show Abdamon every civility.

Baana and Abdamon then acted as the personal escort of the princess, flanked by the soldiery and followed by Abdamon's galley-slaves bearing the presents from Minos of Crete to the King of Tyre.

After the princess and presents of King Minos had been presented at the court of Hiram of Tyre and graciously received by him, he directed that provisions and presents for Abdamon and Baana be loaded upon the argosy and bade them Godspeed. The eyes of the beautiful princess were filled with tears because of joy, they said, at her return home. Abdamon smiled, but only narrowed his eyes, according to the manner of men who follow the sea. The high prow of his ship was now bent to the south and both sails and rowers shot the graceful boat on its way down the Phoenician coast. When passing the great headland, at the base

of which is located the "Stairway of Tyre," Abdamon and Baana discussed with interest their race by dromedaries from Jerusalem to Tyre to carry the appeal for help needed for King Solomon.

In time they sailed past the city of Achzib and knew that they were now opposite the shores of Palestine.

As they approached the roadstead of Joppa, Captain Abdamon said to Baana that they would put in to shore, tie up at a wharf and take on board fresh water for their long cruise from there to the mouth of the Nile. He said it was necessary for the galley slaves or rowers to go ashore periodically in order to preserve their health. He would release every person on board the ship for a day and stand watch himself, that all might be refreshed and strengthened by shore leave.

When they dropped anchor and tied up at the wharf at Joppa, an officer of the port boarded the argosy and notified Captain Abdamon that by a royal edict of King Solomon all shipping, no matter under what flag, was forbidden to take anyone on board without King Solomon's pass, permitting them to leave the realm.

Thereafter Baana, all members of the crew and the rowers, or galley slaves, went ashore, leaving only Captain Abdamon standing watch on board the ship.

CHAPTER XIX.

The Bull Challenges the God of Soloman

On the great plain which borders the eastern bank of the river Jordan the mighty armies of the Pharaoh, Shishak, and Ben Haddad, King of Assyria, had been massing for many days. When the first detachments began to arrive, their movements and locations were kept as secret as possible to prevent the forces of Solomon from discovering their presence. With this end in view, only a limited number was encamped in any one place and the various oases of the great Assyrian desert were made use of as camps of different divisions of the invaders.

Many races and nationalities were included in the armies and many were dressed as members of merchant caravans purposely to conceal, as long as possible, their true character.

When the swarms of black soldiers under the generals of Shishak began to arrive from Ethiopia there had already been massed prior to their coming more than three hundred thousand fighting men of all arms of war, foot, horse, chariots, camels and elephants. The Ethiopians, however, exceeded this number by three to one. In II Corinthians, chap. XIV, it is said that they, the Ethiopians, levied by Pharaoh for this war, numbered a thousand thousand, that is, one million. The combined armies now massed on the east side of the Jordan numbered one million three hundred thousand fighting men; and as there were in those times (as now) more attendants and followers than fighting men, it

is estimated that no fewer than five million men had been massed upon the banks of the Jordan over against the city of Jerusalem.

Besides the vast numbers of the attacking armies, their fighting equipment for that period was highly effective. Their foot soldiers were trained to the highest degree of skill and could carry out military tactics unknown to modern times. The phalanx, developed to so high a degree by Alexander the Great, was well understood and employed by the armies of Pharaoh, more especially among the Ethiopians, who were of gigantic size and great strength, and whose semi-stolid dispositions made their military wedges and triangles all but irresistible. They employed great engines for storming walls of cities, which were transported in parts and put together at convenient points as near the walls as possible. These engines were supported on mighty wheels and bore aloft huge platforms which could be raised or lowered to a level with the top of the walls, and upon these platforms a small army of besieging soldiers was carried. The engine, being put together and loaded with soldiers, was then pushed from within itself and from behind by means of machinery operated by levers which caused its wheels to revolve and move the whole engine with its soldiers against the walls where, unless repulsed by overwhelming forces, they would make an entrance into the city.

The catapult or tribuchet used by the attacking armies corresponded with the artillery of modern times. The former was really an immense crossbow, and the latter a sling of great dimensions. Each required scores of men in its operation. Either could throw a projectile, usually a stone, weighing several hundred pounds, the distance of a furlong. They were very destructive. Men engaged in modern wars are preferred risks from a life insurance view, compared with soldiers of that time. Statistics have been prepared showing that more than a hundred tons of lead is shot away in the wars of the present for every soldier killed. In the tenth century before Christ battles were planned and conducted

for the purpose of defeating the enemy at the earliest possible moment, and with this end in view they were fights to the death and the death roll was made as heavy as possible. In a word, the business of an army was not to capture but to destroy those whom it was sent against.

The horses, camels and elephants were all trained to the highest degree of efficiency in their respective branches of the military service.

With the arrival of the vast number of Ethiopians, all effort of concealment was thrown off and the armies adopted the opposite course and made their forces as conspicuous as possible. King Solomon's watchers from the western cliffs of the Jordan could now readily estimate the vast fighting strength of the attacking forces, and it seemed that no power that the world could muster would be able to stay the onrush of the blood-thirsty hordes that were now rolling in great waves as far north and south as the eye could reach, over the eastern cliffs of the Jordan's walls downward toward the river's bed.

But for the terrible destruction it indicated, the avalanche of humanity would have presented a wonderful sight to the watchers on the western cliffs. In the mighty attacking hosts were men of all races, in groups. Their uniforms were according to their nationality, and all were picturesque. The Ethiopians were uniformed in dazzling red; the Egyptians in white, trimmed with glossy black; the Assyrians in green and gold; tribesmen of Abyssinia, in drab faced with mulberry; and the northern tribesmen in sky blue with turbans of Turkish red.

The banners of the different races and tribes were of all colors and designs, and in such quantities that they stained the whole shifting picture, making a very riot of color.

The drummers and trumpeters throughout the mass of the armies sent forth the wild, weird strains of the martial

music of the times, which stirred the fighting men to the highest pitch of enthusiasm.

Descending through the wadys or lateral grooves cut from the plain above, down through the cliffs to the river bed, came hundreds of thousands of horsemen armed with spears of great length and protected by circular shields. The archers mounted on camels and dromedaries filed down in other wadys and through still others came the long trains of elephants bearing war howdahs filled with four cross-bowmen in each, and clad in low-hanging purple and dull red blankets and head-pieces of woven copper which, while gorgeous in coloring, also served as complete protection to the great animals from arrows and spears.

The horse, camels and elephants filled all of the slanting roadways so that the foot soldiers, over a million strong, could not find room for passage in the overfilled wadys and were forced to make their way down the more precipitous cliffs by means of rope ladders, thrown in place by the engineers, and by steps cut in the walls.

Near the centre of the hosts, descending through a large wady in the eastern cliffs, could be seen the great chariots of Pharaoh's generals and personal guards, clad in burnished gold helmets and suits of woven gold. On a gold and ivory throne supported on a great platform borne by hundreds of giant blackamoors, sat the mighty Pharaoh, Shishak, the real commander of all the mass of humanity that now marched at his bidding. He looked a veritable god,—a ruler of the world. In front of him moved the great black bull, Apis, also borne upon a platform ornamented with every possible splendor, supported by a hundred priests robed in pure white.

The whole spectacle was one of such majesty and grandeur as almost to stupify those on the summits of the western cliffs who watched the human fabric slide slowly and sinuously down the eastern walls toward the Jordan's bed.

Far in advance of the hosts of the bull, an envoy of the Pharaoh, heavily guarded, had descended the eastern walls,

crossed the Jordan and ascended the western bank to a point within shouting distance of the defending armies of Solomon. He had been selected for his clear, penetrating voice, as well as other qualities. He shouted a demand and challenge to the armies of King Solomon, first in Egyptian and then in Hebrew, and the tones of his voice rang out over the great chasm of the Jordan like a brazen war trumpet. He said:

"The Great House (Pharaoh) and the King of Assyria, demand that King Solomon surrender the city of Jerusalem and the kingdom of Palestine;

"that Hiram, King of Tyre, and his forces now in and about Jerusalem be delivered over;

"that Minos, King of Crete, and his forces now in and about Jerusalem, be surrendered;

"that the Master Builder be delivered to the Great House in chains;

"that the hidden treasure of David be discovered and surrendered;

"that the worship of Jehovah cease throughout all the length and breadth of Palestine forever;

"that the high priests of the Temple and all the priests of Jehovah be stoned to death;

"that the Great Temple with all its buildings, golden ornaments, plate and robes be given over to the priests of the bull; and

"that Apis the living bull, the soul of Ptah, be stalled in the Holy of Holies in the center of the great Temple and worshipped as the only true god of the living world.

"If you refuse," spake the trumpet voice, "your city will be laid waste; your men tortured to death; your women used as slaves; your treasure unearthed and taken; your Master Builder slain and thrown over the walls of the Jordan; your Temple razed to the ground, and your people whom we spare from death will be forced to lie prostrate while the bull, our

god, walks upon their writhing bodies. You have one running of sands in the hour-glass to make your answer."

This frightful message was carried quickly to King Solomon, who was seated in his council chamber, surrounded by his generals and advisers.

At his right sat Hiram of Tyre, a splendid and dignified figure of age and wisdom, but possessing the vigor of middle life.

At his left sat Minos, King of Crete, a stalwart young man, but in all parts a king. Near the throne of Solomon sat the Master Builder, his massive head bowed in deepest thought.

The three monarchs, in considering the challenge of the bull, agreed that a warlike death in defense of their kingdoms and of the religion of Solomon would be preferable to captivity and an ignoble death at the hands of the conquerors.

They clasped hands and agreed to go to their destruction, if need be, fighting to keep the light of civilization from being trampled into darkness by the cloven hoofs of the bull.

King Solomon then addressed Hiram Abif and bade him speak his thoughts.

The Master Builder raised his majestic head and his eyes shone with a fire of prophecy. He said:

"What ye do now shall affect the world forever. Not only yourselves, your kingdoms and your people will be freedmen or slaves, but all the teeming generations yet unborn in all lands and those yet undiscovered, shall be savage or civilized, ignorant or enlightened, happy or miserable, according as ye now decide."

"Fear not," he said, "the overnumbering masses against thee. While I live they shall not desecrate thy consecrated Temple and not one that attacks thee shall have a full day of life longer than shall I."

He spake as one endowed with foresight into the things held in the womb of Time.

King Solomon asked him to prepare the answer to the challenge of the bull. This request was urged at once by the stately King of Tyre and Minos of Crete.

Hiram Abif nodded to the messengers who had brought the proclamation of the royal envoy of Shishak. They approached and he said:

"Take this answer to the challenge of the Great House:

"Before the bull is stalled in the Temple he shall eat the bitter salt of the Dead Sea."

CHAPTER XX.

Jehovah Answers the Bull

The envoy of Shishak with his guards returned with despatch to the attacking armies and delivered the answer of King Solomon to the challenge of the bull.

"This," said the Pharaoh, "is the last day of freedom that will ever dawn over Palestine."

Addressing his generals he continued:

"Let the destruction be complete. Leave not one stone of the Temple of Jehovah upon another, and when the earth is bared beneath, cover the place where it stood with ashes and salt. Stone the priests of their accursed religion to death. Put their men to the edge of the sword. Fire their cities with the torch, and after our officers and Egyptian soldiers have selected the handsomest of their women let the Ethiopian blackamoors have all the others to use as they will."

On the summit of the western cliffs were drawn up the armies of Solomon and of Tyre and Crete which were to oppose the attacking armies from the east, but the armies of the defense were many times outnumbered by the attacking forces.

Meantime the sky, which at dawn was clear and beautiful, had become overcast and the darkness was rapidly increasing. All nature was stilled and hushed, save that the roar of the Jordan's waters, seldom heard as far as the summit of the western cliffs, now rose like thunder from the bottom of the gorge.

A wind arose out of the east, sweeping across the chasm of the Jordan from the great desert of Assyria. Soon this wind became a simoon. The sky was black as night and the air seemed to change and become heavy.

Those who were watching from the east gate of the great wall of Jerusalem knew that the Master Builder at times took observations of the heavens from the topmost windows of the tower in the Great Temple. Instinctively their eyes turned toward the tower and there they beheld the tall figure of the Chief Architect, his mighty head turned to the east and then to the north. He appeared to have in his hands a brass tube of great length through which he gazed intently. Speaking of his actions afterwards they said that he seemed to gaze longest in the direction of the Sea of Galilee, a great distance to the north, and then followed with the tube-like instrument the course of the Jordan south and ever south until it passed opposite Jerusalem, and then farther south until it fell into the poisoned waters of the Dead Sea.

There were attendants in the tower with him who said afterwards that his actions were strange and unaccountable. He would turn from his tube through which he gazed, to certain instruments at his hand which spun and wavered like gyroscopes, and to others which moved like pendulums.

He talked, they said, without noting their presence, and they repeated some of his words:

"It is parting! slowly! evenly! They can never pass. Now the outlet of Galilee is deepening; the sea is rushing out. The Jordan is overflowing. It comes! It comes! Before the hourglass has run again the bull will eat the bitter salt of the Dead Sea. The world will be saved and the Great Fraternity will endure forever."

Then he passed out of their sight to the innermost parts of the Temple and they saw him no more. The great water clock in the Temple grounds boomed out the hour of high twelve.

Then suddenly the black pall overhead was pierced by a thousand shafts of blinding light. A thousand thunderbolts roared out of the sky, and the earth, riven to its very centre groaned, heaved and shuddered. The waiting armies on the western cliffs were violently thrown to the ground

and all was darkness. "A terror from Jehovah." (II Chronicles, XIV.)

The great roar of the Jordan mingled with the screams of millions of men perishing, the shrieking of dying horses and the trumpeting of elephants in terror of death. Finally all became still.

The sun burst through the black pall and the watchers on the western cliffs contemplated the work of Jehovah when challenged by the bull.

The earth had quaked in the old bed of the Jordan; had faulted and cracked asunder all the way from the Sea of Gallilee on the north to the poisoned waters of the Dead Sea south of Jerusalem.

The Jordan had dropped down to a new bed, hundreds of feet below the old one and a great quantity of the waters of the Sea of Gallilee had been released and rushed in a great flood down the deep fissure of the new Jordan to the Dead Sea.

The mighty armies of the Pharaoh and Ben Haddad, King of Assyria, had been thrown into this unspeakable jagged and torn crack, and men, horses, camels, elephants and all had been cut, mauled and ground through this hideous chasm out into the scalding brine of the Dead Sea.

The bull went with the rest of the wrecked armies, and when found by searchers from Jerusalem, his dead body had been cast into the barren and desolate opening of the wady of Arabah, which anciently was the outlet of the Dead Sea to the ocean. His glossy black sides were whipped to shreds; his graceful neck was broken and his lacquered horns torn away; his sightless eyes were staring upward at the burning sun of the Assyrian desert; his distended mouth was filled with the bitter sulphurous salt of the Dead Sea.

Jehovah had answered the challenge of the bull.

CHAPTER XXI.

Death of the Master Builder

To the three brothers, Metusael, Fanor and Akirop, had been entrusted by their father, the powerful Shishak, one of the most important of the great purposes he hoped to accomplish in capturing Jerusalem; this was none other than to discover the hiding-place of the treasure of David and obtain knowledge of the secret entrance to it, so that as soon as Shishak's forces entered Jerusalem, Shishak himself could immediately take possession of the great treasure.

The treasure of David had its first beginning with the prophets and judges of Israel when the Hebrews were delivered out of bondage in Egypt by Moses, four hundred and eighty years before the work on the Temple of Solomon was begun. This treasure had been consecrated to the Lord by the early patriarchs and had constantly been added to and reconsecrated through the reigns of the prophets, judges, and kings of Israel for half a thousand years down to the beginning of the reign of David, father of Solomon. Although David was a warlike king and his entire reign was a succession of wars and battles, yet this did not spring from his desires, but rather arose from the necessity of defending his people and kingdom from the encroachments of their many enemies. David, at heart, was a deeply religious king and it was his earnest desire to build a Temple to Jehovah such as had no existence in the world at that time, and upon such a scale of magnificance that it would never be outdone in future ages. David had earnestly besought the Lord to give peace and tranquility throughout his kingdom sufficient to permit the erection of the mighty Temple. This prayer was denied, but Jehovah, through the visions of David, communicated with him and promised that

his son, who should ascend the throne in his room, would be able to complete the Temple. Jehovah further promised that when the Temple was completed and the Holy of Holies with the Ark of the Covenant deposited therein had been consecrated to the Lord and veiled so that none but the High Priest might enter and he only once a year blindfolded and walking backward, that a part of the very spirit of Jehovah would have an abiding place there.

Fired with the deepest religious fervor David, notwithstanding the turmoil attending his reign, found time to add such enormous quantities to the great treasure which was to be used in the erection of the Temple and the Temple grounds that it became the greatest assembling of wealth at one place that has ever been known in the world, either before or since that period. The world wide fame of this gathering together of wealth had become so great that by the time King Solomon succeeded to the throne it was known throughout the world as the "Treasure of David." By the best authentic records now obtainable it actually exceeded in value all the minted money in the world today.

Here, then, was one of the most powerful engines, if it could be grasped by the Pharaoh, which might enable him to master the world and compel every king, prince or potentate to render him, Shishak, king of kings, homage, pay him tribute and grovel upon their bellies in the dust before his god, the bull.

Shishak had great pride in his brilliant but brutal sons, despite the fact that a portion of Fanor's left jaw and all of his left ear were lost in the battle with the Wayfaring Man. The three swarthy princes were indeed as astute as they were ruthless and while he, Shishak, with his thousand thousand Ethiopian giants, his mighty divisions of horse camels and elephants was gathering on the eastern cliffs of the Jordan, his three sons, princes of Egypt, were by his orders to discover the location of the treasure of David and have it ready for the father to take possession of immediately upon his entry into Jerusalem.

Thus it came about that the three brothers, at the time that the Master Builder disappeared from the highest point where he had been studying his seismographic instruments, were searching for him through the great Temple. They were well aware of the near approach of the armies from the east and they relied on this fact as much as anything else to enable them to accomplish their purpose. The brothers, although employed in the guise of workmen about the Temple, had never obtained the slightest inkling of the location of the great treasure. They had worked their way by dint of memorizing the secret work and pretending an interest in their brethren until they had become Masters of their Assemblies and afterwards Past Masters or princes among the Craft, all this the better to accomplish their purpose. The secrets of the Fraternity were sought by them for the selfish purpose of learning the location of the treasure. They felt that the Master Builder, who possessed all knowledge, knew also the whereabouts of the treasure, and from him this information might be wrung. If it could not be found, the purpose of their powerful father, the Pharaoh, would only be accomplished in part and perhaps only the smaller part at that, even if Jerusalem was captured and all of Palestine laid waste. In fact, the capture of the treasure of David was the most important thing in the plan of Shishak for dominion of the world. Hence the necessity for the immediate finding of the treasure, because if it was not found before the capture of Jerusalem it probably never could be thereafter, as its secret hiding place was not likely known to more than two or three persons and they might be killed or might forever disappear while the city was being sacked.

The three brothers, being in high offices among the craftsmen, naturally had certain followers who believed in their evil calumnies circulated against the Master Builder. This was not an unnatural situation. Until the end of time, no doubt, there will be black sheep in every flock. There will be in the very heart of the most ancient and exalted institutions known to mankind ignorant and selfish persons who,

because of their pertinacity, will push their way through their lodges and into the high positions of Past Masters, which ground of vantage they will use for the evil purpose oi injuring their brethren by innuendo and secret calumnies.

In this nefarious work the three arch-villains had succeeded so well they were confident that if the Master Builder were but put out of the way the whole body of the craft, led by the members especially disaffected, would rally immediately to the standard of the three princes and they would at one stroke be in command of the one hundred and eighty-three thousand men engaged in the Temple work. With such a tremendous force at their command inside of Jerusalem, and the great armies of their father and the King of Assyria besieging the city from without, they could not fail to capture Jerusalem in a few hours after the attack began.

As is usually the case, the propaganda of lies and falsehoods circulated by the three princes, who were all Past Masters, found a better lodging-place in the minds of their less informed brethren than in those who had advanced further in the great Fraternity. There were no other Past Masters or princes of the craft who had been won over to the side of the three arch traitors, nor had any Masters of the craft gone over to them. Their converts were among the fellowcrafts or hewers and as these numbered eighty thousand, there was therefore an abundance of fertile soil in which to sow the seeds of sedition. It had been planned by the three traitors to wring from the Master Builder the hiding place of the treasure of David and, in order that their father, the mighty Pharaoh, with themselves, might be master of every avenue of human endeavor, it was their purpose to obtain from Grand Master Hiram Abif, THAT which would make them supreme in the Great Fraternity. This, with the treasure of David, and the military dominion over Palestine, Phoenicia and Crete, would make the Pharaoh and themselves as his sons and heirs-apparent, absolute dictators of the world in every walk of life. If they could but obtain from the Master Builder the supreme secrets

of the Great Fraternity they would put him to death as they intended King Solomon should be dealt with, and would, themselves, be the Grand Masters and supreme rulers of the great Fraternity, through which every avenue of intelligence and information among all people would come under their control. With this powerful engine in their hands they could gain access to the secret chambers of every power in the world; they could thus possess the knowledge which would enable them to conquer and subject all independent nations of the world. At the same time they could, through these secret avenues of intelligence, learn of and quickly put an end to any attempts to rebel against or throw off the yoke of the Pharaoh.

All the habits and customs of civilized peoples at that time differed from those of the present. Then secret organizations such as the Masonic Faternity were as powerful among their own members as states and governments now are, and almost as powerful as kings and monarchs then were. This power was so great that at a somewhat later period than the one of which we write the Masonic Fraternity was granted the exclusive control over its own members to the extent that for a period of twenty centuries they could not be tried in civil courts, nor were they subject to taxation, military duties nor the laws of any nation, and were tried and punished only in the courts of their Fraternity. They were free from the control of any king, prince or potentate or of any national authority. This explains why they are called "Free" Masons. The Masonic institution was a supreme power within itself throughout the civilized world. While it did not have a particular territory over which its Masters and Grand Masters reigned supreme, yet it was as much a separate power, beyond and apart from the rule of any state or monarch as if it occupied, exclusively, a territory with definite frontiers and boundaries. It was in a certain sense more powerful, it might be said vastly more powerful, through its peculiarly compact form and far-flung dominion, than any monarch allocated to a realm

with a fixed boundary. The Masonic Fraternity penetrated every civilized or semi-civilized land. It was in absolute control of Masonry, structural work and building of every kind and character above a mere hovel. A cowan was a man who attempted to engage in operative masonry, but had not served his seven years as an entered apprentice, been passed to the rank of a fellowcraft or hewer of stone and other material and been given his "mark" and "accepted" in the craft. This explains why they are called "Accepted" Masons. Any individual might pile rough stone loosely together without mortar in making himself a stone hut for his own use or in building rough, loosely thrown-up stone fences. He who attempted to go beyond this, who had not reached the place of a fellowcraft, been "accepted" and given his "mark," was charged with being a cowan and, upon conviction, received the death penalty. This was universal and not confined to the realm of any particular monarch. It may then be truly said that the power of the Masonic Fraternity with its ramifications everywhere might be likened to a super-jurisdiction binding together, and in certain respects controlling, all nations. It will be seen at once that, supplemented by this mighty power, could the Egyptians but obtain it, the three princes under the wing of the Pharaoh, would be the supreme Grand Masters of all humanity; hence their overwhelming desire not only for the treasure of David but for that still greater treasure, the "MASTER'S WORD."

The three traitors rushed about the Temple buildings in search of twelve fellowcrafts who had agreed to meet them at the entrance of the bridge leading to the Temple grounds across the Tyroppeon valley. The fellowcrafts, however, were not there and the three brothers hastened through the double passage to the judgment hall of the king; thence through the triple passage and on through the court of the Gentiles, and from there they went through the high gate to the middle court in which they found the twelve fellowcrafts standing in a group, showing by their actions that

they were thoroughly alarmed. The three traitors accosted them and rudely demanded an explanation. The spokesman of the twelve, beginning timidly and continuing somewhat confidently, stated that they had decided that the purposes of the three princes were wicked and they would not join them. At this the three brothers upbraided them calling them cowans but soon desisted, then quickly disappeared through the entrance to the main Temple, passing between the brazen pillars Jachin and Boaz which stood in front of the porch of the Temple. High twelve had struck, and it was known to be the custom of the Master Builder to enter the Temple, engage in prayer, and to make such changes and additions to the plans on his trestle-board that the craftsmen might be constantly informed as to the progress of the work.

Akirop, being at the south gate, observed through the dim light the approach of the majestic figure of the Grand Master. His head was bowed and evidently he had been engaged in contemplation of the weightiest subjects. He was uncovered. His long gray hair and white beard, together with his heavy figure and deeply graven features, gave him an appearance of supreme majesty. His eyes appeared to be turned inward; his features were working; his lips moved as if in prayer, or else he was thinking aloud. Akirop could hear the words dropped from his lips but indistinctly. He said:

"My work— is— finished.— No— more— plans— are— needed— on— the— trestle— board. The— House— is— ready— The— challenge— of— the— bull— is— answered."

Akirop, a thoroughly brutal and wicked man, was yet so astonished by the supernatural light gleaming from the features of the Master Builder, now rapidly nearing the south gate, that he almost forgot his purpose. Pulling himself together he blocked the exit and, threatening the Master Builder, shouted a demand that he inform him of the hiding place of the treasure of David. Hiram Abif gazed intently

into the eyes of Akirop and slowly shook his head. Akirop then demanded that he furnish him the secret Word by which the treasure might be found and the Great Fraternity controlled. Akirop continued by threatening the Master Builder with death unless this information was at once given. To this he answered:

"Not till the bull is stalled in the Temple wilt thou need the Word."

Enraged and disconcerted, Akirop, who had intended to slay the Master Builder after obtaining the information demanded, suffered him to go his way.

It had been agreed between the brothers that in slaying the Master Builder they were not to use their broadswords, and thus avoid spilling his blood in the sanctuary, as this might lead to their discovery and death before the victorious armies of the Pharaoh could break down the defenses of Jerusalem and enter the city. The Master Builder, seeing the south gate blocked by Akirop and being himself unarmed, turned and passed through the corridors of the middle chamber toward the western gate. There he found Fanor blocking the gate. The Master Builder, knowing that but one exit was left to him, now went through the central passages of the Middle Chamber to the east gate, followed by Akirop and Fanor. Metusael stood in the gateway. He shouted to the Master Builder upon his approach that he would be slain at once unless the hiding place of the treasure of David, and the Master's Word were forthcoming.

The last words of the great architect were:

"When the sands of the hour-glass have run but once the worshippers of the bull will need not the Word."

Enraged because of his failure, Metusael dealt the Master Builder a blow upon the head with a heavy instrument and felled him to the floor of the Temple, dead.

Instantly the earth trembled and rocked, riven by a mighty earthquake. The deafening crash of a thousand thunderbolts burst through the doors and windows of the

Temple. All light disappeared into the blackness of night. A confused rumble composed of the death screams from a million human throats, the piercing shrieks of more than a hundred thousand perishing horses, the terrified cries of great numbers of dying camels and the trumpeting of many thousands of elephants, rolled into the Temple from the direction of the river Jordan.

The three brothers, thoroughly terrified, seized the lifeless body of the Master Builder and hurried away into the darkness.

CHAPTER XXII.

The Wayfaring Man at Joppa

When Baana went ashore at Joppa with the crew and rowers of Abdamon's galleon he had no particular purpose other than to take exercise, the better to preserve his health and strength. With a small amount of scrip in his roll he bought some fresh fruits, then walked a distance eastward on the Jerusalem road to get beyond the houses of the villagers.

Having passed beyond the confines of the village, he left the road and scaled a small rocky knoll from the top of which he could see over the town of Joppa and all of the roadstead and its shipping. (Joppa has no harbor, but only a roadstead or shallow place in the sea where boats may find an anchorage.)

The town interested him chiefly because it was the seaport for Jerusalem through which all shipping passed either inward or outward bound to or from that city, which was three hundred furlongs distant from the seacoast at this point. The principal reason for the existence of Joppa is to serve as a gateway from Jerusalem to the sea.

Baana seated himself upon a rock on the little eminence he had climbed and devoted his attention to the fruit he had purchased, and to a study of the town of Joppa and, beyond that, to the shipping in the anchorage.

Abdamon's galleon could be plainly seen tied up to a small wharf, with the captain himself pacing to and fro on the deck standing watch in the absence of the crew. This was the only ship laying alongside the wharf; the others were anchored out in the roadstead a considerable distance from shore.

Still further out in the offing Baana noticed the dim outline of a southward-bound argosy displaying a high saw-tooth prow and cut and color of sail that belonged distinctively to shipping from the great maritime city of Tyre. Baana's thoughts flew to the beautiful Tyrian princess, rescued from the Egyptian treasure ship, and he wondered how matters were with her in the distant city to the north. Was she well and happy? Did her thoughts ever revert to him? Would he ever see her again? Lost in reverie, he gazed in the direction of Tyre with eyes that saw naught of the intervening land and sea, but saw only the beautiful city which sheltered the most gloriously beautiful woman he ever had seen.

He was suddenly awakened from his day-dreaming by the scurry and beat of sandaled feet approaching from the east on the Jerusalem road. Looking in the direction whence came the sound he saw three strange figures following each other in single file, running toward the seacoast and, apparently in great alarm as if in fear of their lives. Baana was at a considerable height above the road and the hurrying figures as they approached would pass beneath him on their way to the sea.

As the runners came nearer and nearer, Baana noticed that they acted like madmen. Their clothing was torn to shreds. Their head coverings were lost. Their hair, which had once been shiny black, was ashen gray, tangled and disheveled as if tortured by demons. Their feet had worn through the soles of their sandals and were leaving bloody tracks upon the grit of the road. Their eyes showed more white than their original deep black. They reeled from side to side as they ran and at times screamed incoherently to each other. As they came closer Baana felt that the figures were familiar, but recognition did not follow in his mind, until they came close enough for him to observe that the face of the middle figure was hideously deformed. The left side of his jaw was completely gone, and now Baana noticed also that he had no left ear. Instantly, he recognized him

as Fanor, the one in advance as Akirop and the tall figure in the rear as that of Metusael, the three princes over the workmen of the great Temple. In their hurry and perturbation they did not notice Baana seated on the height above them. They sped on down the road to Joppa. Baana watched them with great interest and saw them race through the street of the town by which the Jerusalem road led down to the sea. He watched them continue in their mad flight to and out upon the wharf to where Abdamon's galleon was made fast. As they neared the boat he saw that Captain Abdamon, who was still standing watch alone, observed their approach and had come to the boat end of the gang plank which rested upon the deck. At this moment Baana, beyond ordinary earshot, heard Akirop, who was in the lead, hail Abdamon and ask him if he was master of the ship. Baana could not hear the answer but could see Abdamon nod his head, and again Baana heard the shout apparently from the misshapen mouth of Fanor, asking Abdamon if he would take passengers. Again Baana saw Abdamon nod his head but could not hear the reply. At that moment Akirop started across the gangplank toward the ship. Abdamon's voice, now raised to a shout, could be clearly heard demanding to know if they had a pass to leave the port. Baana did not hear the answer, but saw the three traitors attempt to rush over the gangplank and board the ship. Clearly they were not able to furnish the pass, and were trying to force their way on board. The doughty captain, skilled in the use of the broadsword and long accustomed to battling with pirates on the seacoast of Morocco, pulled forth a heavy cutlass from its clanking scabbard at his belt and laid about him with such terrific force that the three traitors, slashed and with blood spurting from the wounds made by his heavy blade, turned and ran back up the road toward Jerusalem. They staggered and reeled as if besotted with drink. They had clearly run a great distance, doubtless the full three hundred furlongs from Jerusalem. They seemed not to have slept for

many hours and perhaps had been without food also. They now dragged their nearly lifeless bodies past the base of the hillock where Baana sat. He heard them cursing and abusing each other, each charging the other with bringing about the terrible condition in which they now found themselves. Each asked what should now be done and finally Baana heard one of them, whom he took to be Metusael, scream out that they would flee to the hills and there find a hiding place. Baana watched them disappear eastward on the Jerusalem road, and sat for some time in contemplation of their strange actions. Being unable to fathom the reasons for their conduct he dismissed them from his thoughts and slowly wended his way down the declivity to the Jerusalem road and returned to the galleon. There he talked the matter over with Abdamon and they finally arrived at the conclusion that the wickedness of the three brothers had at last been discovered at Jerusalem and orders had been issued for their capture. This seemed the only solution, and the matter was dropped.

Captain Abdamon now told Baana that they would remain in Joppa for perhaps two days more, as a leak had been discovered in the bilge of the galleon and he had given orders for the crew and galley-slaves to return to the ship to man the pumps in shifts, and to empty the bilge water and keep it out until the ship's calker could examine the inside seams and locate and stop the leak.

Baana went ashore again for the purpose of procuring a supply of tar for calking. While passing up the street which gave out upon the Jerusalem road he noticed some figures coming down the road from the east. With the previous experience fresh in mind he awaited their approach. As they came nearer he noticed that they appeared to be workmen from the Temple and, from their garb, concluded that they were Giblim or hewers. Like the other three they also appeared to be greatly excited and when they came within earshot, hailed Baana and asked him if he had seen any strangers recently. He replied affirmatively, and ex-

plained the coming of the three brothers; how they had attempted to board the galleon now tied at the wharf; that they were not permitted to do so by the captain because thay had no pass to leave the port. He then said that the three strangers had turned and run eastward in wild alarm up the Jerusalem road, and that as they passed him, he had heard them say one to another that they intended to flee to the hills and conceal themselves. Upon receiving this information the Giblim turned and sped eastward on the Jerusalem road.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The Wayfaring Man at King Solomon's Court

When the work of calking the leak in Abdamon's galleon had been completed, a couple of days after the events related in the previous chapter and orders had been given to make sail and weigh anchor, a detachment of armed horsemen from Jerusalem arrived at Joppa. They dismounted, boarded the galleon and placed the ship under arrest. The commander of the soldiery said to Captain Abdamon that he had orders to hold the ship and protect it from all harm while he returned to Jerusalem with its captain and his friend, Baana.

No further explanations were offered by the captain of King Solomon's guard, for so the troopers proved to be. Every courtesy was shown Baana and Abdamon, but they were given to understand that they were prisoners and any attempt to escape would be futile.

Upon their arrival at Jerusalem they were escorted into the presence of Achizar, governor of the king's palace, who welcomed them cordially. They were pleased to find themselves under the care and protection of this powerful official, as they felt he knew the truth regarding their trip to Tyre in place of the murdered messengers of King Solomon and that no harm could come to them while they were in his custody.

The detachment of troopers having delivered Baana and Abdamon over to Achizar were discharged and immediately disappeared.

The governor and the two friends sat in conference for an extended period. Achizar explained the miraculous de-

liverance of Jerusalem from the attacking forces of Shishak and his ally. He went on and with great sorrow told of the death of the Master Builder and then continued by stating that the three murderers, Metusael, Fanor and Akirop, had been found where they had concealed themselves among the hills, had been captured, returned to Jerusalem, tried before King Solomon and put to death because of their perfidy.

Baana and Abdamon then outlined their wanderings and adventures since they were last in the presence of Achizar. Baana learned with great satisfaction that Minos, King of Crete, true to his promise, as the requested reward for the services of Baana in restoring Minos to his kingdom, had, with despatch, come to the assistance of King Solomon, with all available military forces of Crete under his personal command. In company with Hiram of Tyre and his fighting sailors he was ready to stand with the armies of King Solomon against the invasion of the Pharaoh and his ally until the forces of all three of the defending nations had been destroyed.

Achizar then caused Baana and Abdamon to be properly prepared and clothed for presentation at King Solomon's court.

When the two friends, escorted by Achizar, governor of the palace with a detachment of palace guards in full uniform, passed into the great judgment hall of the King of Palestine they were dazzled by its splendor and magnificence. The king sat on the curule, an ebony throne inlaid with ivory and gold upon an elevated dais which was reached by a succession of semi-circular steps. At his right hand, upon a throne of ebony inlaid with gold, sat the majestic King of Tyre, the friend of David, the father of Solomon. At the left of King Solomon, upon a throne of solid silver overlaid with golden flowers and laurel leaves sat Minos, the young King of Crete. Among the nobles and generals and palace attendants there were three strange figures, masked and concealed in black robes and cowls. Two of these black robed figures clearly were aged persons, seated together in

front of King Minos and upon a lower level. The other masked and cloaked figure, evidently much younger, was seated on a broad step near the stately King of Tyre.

At a signal from King Solomon, Baana and Abdamon were brought to the foot of the great stairway directly before the king, and formally presented. He addressed them at length, speaking first to Baana and then to Abdamon. The king related to Baana that he had become familiar with his humble origin and birthplace in the goatherd's hovel in the wady leading down from the Assyrian plain, through the great cliffs to the bed of the river Jordan; that his diligence in acquiring knowledge from the good priest had been learned of; that the adventures of Baana after leaving his place of birth had become known; that he had been told of Baana's courageous and noble stand against overwhelming odds in the stone chamber where Fanor demanded that he take sides against the Master Builder and himself, the king; King Solomon continued, outlining his knowledge of the fateful race to Tyre by Baana and Abdamon upon the dromedaries in place of the king's murdered messengers; also the flight of Baana and Abdamon from Jerusalem because the king's guard and the three traitors and their friends had all given orders that Baana and Abdamon be put to death if captured. The noble conduct of the two friends toward the young King of Crete was then dwelt upon; also the unselfish request of Baana that King Minos send forces to the aid of Jerusalem when asked what reward he desired for his services to the young king when a galley slave.

King Solomon then ordered Baana to step forward and ascend to a position upon the dais immediately in front of the throne and within reach of the king. The king arose, threw back Baana's robe and took from his neck the chain and triangle of massive gold bearing blue sapphires at its points, which had been placed upon Baana's neck by his mother when he began his journey to Jerusalem seeking work upon the Temple. At a signal from the king a cunning goldsmith stepped forward and placed before the king a

tiny forge supported upon a tall tripod. In this miniature forge burned a small blue flame. Upon another signal made by the king the treasurer of the palace stepped forward and opened a casket which, to Baana's intense surprise, was an exact duplicate of the casket from which his mother had taken the symbol just lifted from his neck by the king. From this casket the king took a triangle which bore three lustrous blue sapphires at each point, identical with the triangle pendant from the chain worn by Baana. The goldsmith took the two triangles and, laying one upon the other, quickly soldered them together with gold solder melted at the tiny forge. Handing the finished work to King Solomon, the goldsmith disappeared. King Solomon then held up the chain and said:

"Behold the double triangle is again united as of half a thousand years ago. It is now the six pointed star of the house of Aaron, from which Baana descends. It was the shield of David, my father, in whose room I sit, and is now become the great seal of my reign, potent against evil forces forever. This, my great seal, protects the rightful wearer against maladies and the evil machinations of his enemies. The seventy-two links represent the seventy-two members of the Sanhedrim, the great court of our people, embracing all of justice and wisdom within human reach. The seventy-two characters, one graven upon each link, are the seventy-two names or attributes of Jehovah. A combination of them, known only to Grand Masters of the Great Fraternity, comprises the Master's Word which unlocks the entrance to the treasure of David, which is concealed in a great stone cavern in the bowels of the earth under the city of Jerusalem. Over the entrance to the cavern flows a mighty river, emblematic of eternity. By means known only to those who possess the secret, a portion of the river may be diverted a hundred furlongs from the city's walls and, in the space of two suns, the stone entrance to the treasure chamber will appear above the water; this will open only upon the Master's Word given by three, of whom but two now liveth."

"Thou, Baana, art henceforth guardian for your God and king of the Treasure of David and shall for that purpose stand in the room of him slain by three murderous sons of Shishak, whose place in all else never can be filled."

King Solomon then addressed Abdamon, bade him step forward, ascend the stairway and stand before the throne. The king then reviewed Abdamon's part in the great work that had been accomplished by him and Baana and closed by saying that Abdamon had been appointed supreme commander of all of the naval forces of Palestine and would immediately enter that great office. The king's treasurer had been directed to purchase Abdamon's galleon at a just price and to pay for it and thereafter to turn it back to Abdamon as one of the warships of the realm.

King Solomon then bowed to Minos, King of Crete. This stalwart young monarch stepped forward and addressed Baana, saying:

"Thy unselfishness, Baana, in asking reward for thy service to me, that I come with forces of my empire to assist thy king, shall not prevent me from bestowing upon thee the greatest reward of which I am able."

At this moment two court attendants assisted the two masked figures in front of Minos to arise to their feet and removing their masks and heavy black cloaks, Baana's aged father and mother stood before him, their faces radiant with joy. The young king of Crete spoke again saying:

"Thy father and thy mother are more to thee than bags of gold and titles to broad lands. To reward thee I searched them out and brought them here; to me falls the happiness to provide their comfort near unto thee for all their days to come."

King Solomon now bowed to his right and the majestic figure of Hiram of Tyre arose to his full height. In a rich, deep voice, like the diapason of the winds through the cedars of Lebanon, he spake to Baana:

"I shall not be outdone, Baana, with gifts made thee by thy wise monarch or puissant Crete. Better than gifts of place or wealth are mine."

At this instant a court attendant stepped forward and assisted the third figure to remove the mask and long black coat. Baana, astonished beyond expression, beheld the beautiful princess of Tyre.

King Hiram spake further:

"Baana, the princess of Tyre, who was safely returned to my capital by thee and thy seafaring friend at the command of Crete, is prized by thee more a thousandfold than the Treasure of David which thy king has set thee over. The aged prince, her husband, died since thou returnst her to her palace. She has thought for none but thee, and I, her monarch, give her to thee and declare, as king of all the Phoenician coast, thee and this royal princess united as one by law of Tyre and thy God's commands."

At this a fanfare of trumpets, pipes and cymbals burst forth, filling the great court with volumes of harmony which reverberated through its columns, against its pilasters, and rolled upward to the lofty dome of its vaulted roof. The three great kings turned their faces toward each other as if in consultation; the mighty assemblage in the throne-room knelt as if in prayers of thankfulness, with their eyes directed downward.

Upon the broad stairway of the throne, stood a group oblivious to all the world beside. The aged father, the white-haired mother and the princess of Tyre, all clasping in love's embrace the exalted figure of THE WAYFARING MAN.

THE END.

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